Tragically enough, Jinnah, Gandhi, Nehru, Azad and Patel failed to iron out their disagreements and to keep pace with communal problems for a peaceful settlement. On October 18, 1939, the Viceroy stated that communal differences would be settled after the War with some modifications in the Government of India Act 1935. As the communal impasse continued, the Congress became a party to partition, though Gandhi believed in the ultimate victory of good and truth. Jinnah's Lahore Resolution and demand for Pakistan with clear terms, failure of Wavell Plan and Simla Conference, Cabinet Mission Plan and the Interim Government made the partition of India inevitable.

In 1946, the important factions were the Congress, the League, the Sikhs, the Backward and Scheduled Castes and the Princes in the political arena. Azad wanted independence first, and anything later. Jinnah wanted to settle the fundamentals of Pakistan first, and anything

1. Speeches and Statements of Linlithgow, October 18, 1939, Linlithgow Collection, National Archive of India.

3 afterwards. Ambedkar and Jagjivan Ram opposed the Constituent Assembly dominated by the Caste Hindus and demanded separate electoral college for the Scheduled Castes. Giani Kartar Singh, Baldev Singh and Master Tara Singh demanded a separate sovereign state of Khalistan. The Hindu Mahasabha and the Liberal leaders vehemently opposed the partition of India. The question of Princely States had lingered on due to war in Europe.

After the failure of the Wavell Plan on May 16, 1946, the League had refused to enter the Constituent Assembly and Nehru had installed the Constituent Assembly on December 9, 1946. Prime Minister Attlee informed the House of Commons on December 11, that conversation with the Indian leaders during the last week ended in a failure. While Nehru had left for India on December 12, 1946,

4. Ibid., pp. 243-45.
5. Ibid., pp. 242-43.
6. Ibid., pp. 245-46.
and Wavell, Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan were still in London, Attlee was looking around for a successor of the Viceroy, because of the Wavell's failure. Attlee looked to Dickie Mountbatten and the idea for the appointment of Lord Mountbatten struck to his mind. Mountbatten was suggested as a replacement for Linlithgow for the first time by Leo Amery in the summer of 1942, and again nine months later by Sir Ralph Glyn. Krishna Menon had also told Sir Stafford Cripps that Mountbatten's appointment as Viceroy of India would be welcomed by the Congress in view of the fact that Nehru had established good relationship with the King-Emperor's cousin. Attlee also realised that the extremely lively and exciting personality of the Royal family member would also influence the Princes. Further, Mountbatten had liberal ideas and was acceptable both by the Liberal Government as well as the Conservatives.

Prime Minister Attlee invited Mountbatten at 10 Downing Street on December 18, 1946, and offered him the

Viceroyalty of India. Mountbatten agreed to the proposal on certain conditions. He insisted to fix a firm date for transfer of power. On March 18, 1947, Attlee fixed June 1948, as the effective date. Mountbatten was granted 'plenipotentiary powers' or 'discretionary powers' far wider than his predecessors. He had also the benefits of invention of the telegraph which had enabled him to consult with Whitehall from New Delhi within a few minutes. On the request of Mountbatten Pethick-Lawrence was replaced by Lord Listowell in April. Further, he was facilitated with a staff of his own choice to be superimposed on the existing staff in Delhi. However, on February 11, 1947, Mountbatten formally accepted the office of the Viceroy. Mountbatten's departure to India was fixed for March 20, 1947. On January 31, Attlee had already informed Wavell about the appointment of a new Viceroy. However, he was not officially informed until February 13. It extremely shocked Wavell who said to Abell: "They've sacked me."

Before arrival to India, Mountbatten had studied the proceedings of the House of Commons relating to Indian debate and almost daily consulted the Cabinet in London to find a solution of the thorny problem of establishing a unitary government or vivisection of India between the two major parties - Congress and the Muslim League. He concluded to advise the Indian leaders that the "retention of Indian Army under Central control was vital both to the external security of India and to the maintenance of internal law and order" and that "he would not allow them to use British bayonets to keep law and order, but only to protect British lives." Further, Mountbatten had the experience of visiting India with the Prince of Wales in 1921, when he realised that hostile crowds, students boycott and the Congress demonstrations were unlikely to be tranquilled. When Mountbatten had visited India, as Supreme Commander in 1943, he found Jinnah in a better position than Gandhi, who was put behind the bars, but the Civil Disobedience Movement launched by him was still in progress. The same year, Linlithgow was replaced by Wavell, who failed to reconcile with the demands of the Congress and the Muslim League. After the

Japanese threat dwindled, Whitehall became anxious for a rapid settlement in view of civil war condition in India; but Wavell was not allowed to have an informal talk with Gandhi. Mountbatten thought it an important cause of the failure of Wavell's plan. Therefore, he decided to have an informal talk with Gandhi.

Before Mountbatten's arrival in India, Attlee had already declared on February 20, 1947, that the power would be transferred to responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June, 1948, (for which Wavell was unsuccessfully pleading for months), and if a constitution was not framed by a fully representative Constituent Assembly by that date, the power would be handed over as desired by the His Majesty's Government. This statement, on the one hand, deferred Congress demand that the League should be asked to leave the interim government so as to watch the League's actions to the new policy of the Government, and, on the other, closed the doors of all possibility of the creation of Pakistan in the event the League failed to join the Constituent Assembly. Jinnah would not

17. R.C. Majumdar, op.cit., p. 757.
like this and feeling his humiliation, became more antagonistic to the Congress and an agreement with the Congress inside the Assembly became more unlikely than ever.

Jinnah reacted to the statement because it meant partition but not on the principle desired by him. He did not like the transfer of power to different Muslim majority states, but to a union of Muslim majority states, particularly of Punjab and Bengal, to which the Congress and Hindu Mahasabha did never agree. Nehru echoed that Bengal and the Punjab should be partitioned, including only Muslim majority provinces, because League persisted settlement on the basis of strong States or groups of States with a weak Federal Centre, which could make the Congress quite incapable of handling India's problems of poverty, illiteracy and out-moded social customs. Therefore, Nehru preferred "to lop some of the branches from the main trunk" and "to let Jinnah and the League take the areas.


which they could indisputedly claim." This hypothesis was agreed to by all the Congressmen, except Gandhiji, as it involved much shedding to blood.

On March 15, 1947, Woodrow Wyatt advised that the Muslim League would be "warned that if they no longer hold their portfolios by June of next year, the power will be given to the Congress Interim Government." He also suggested that the Army should not be handed over to any one party but to a Central Government and that the military should not be used to suppress communal disturbances so that the Indians may learn the problems of law and order. Wyatt also suggested partition. On that very day Attlee declared in the House of Commons:

"India herself must choose what will be her future Constitution. What will be her position in the world. I hope that the Indian people may elect to remain within the British Commonwealth ..... The British Commonwealth and Empire is not bound together by chains of external compulsion. It is a free association of free peoples." 24

21. Ibid.


23. Ibid.

Prime Minister Attlee had realised that the power of veto given to minority had blocked the constitutional development ever since. Therefore, he declared that the British Government "cannot allow a minority to place a veto on the advance of the majority." He warned that any attempt "to persist with old methods would lead not to a solution but a deadlock." He wrote to Mountbatten:

"It is the definite objective of His Majesty's Government to obtain a unitary Government for India and the Indian States, if possible within the British Commonwealth, through the medium of a Constituent Assembly ... and you should do the utmost in your power to persuade all parties to work together to this end ... If by October 1, you consider that there is no prospect of reaching a settlement on the basis of a unitary government ... you should report to HMG on the steps which you consider should be taken for the handing over of power on the due date...."

The Cabinet Mission was sent to India to bring about an agreement between the Congress and the League in view of the probable "direct action" by the Congress.

Though the object of the Mission was all right, yet it were restricted to make any discretionary arrangement i.e. they were not allowed to make an 'Award' in case of default of an agreement. Wavell was of the opinion that due to lack of discretionary powers, the Cabinet Mission could not produce a better plan. The rigidity of the Mission Plan was also responsible for its failure. On the one hand, the Congress claimed that the groupings of states were not 'Compulsory' and 'Fundamental', while the Muslim League considered it otherwise. This was the fundamental point of difference. Pethick-Lawrence did not allow Wavell to explain these points to Gandhi in the right perspective for six months as a result the Constituent Assembly delayed its installation. Since the Congress did not accept the 'compulsory groupings' as Attlee stated on December 6, 1946, the Muslim League emphasised that the Congress did not accept it. Further, Nehru's statement that he would make amendments in the grouping principle after the formation of the Congress Interim Government, had annoyed the


30. Ibid., pp. 647-51.
Muslim League. Even in view of such a challenge, it was Wavell's favour that Nehru was allowed to form the Interim Government and later, when Muslim League members joined the Council, the Congress and League members sat in opposition as the greatest rival and, thus, the Interim Government did not work properly. Therefore, Mountbatten was empowered to impose his own scheme, in case the Congress and the League failed to produce a common plan for establishing a unitary Government to which power could be transferred and which could frame a constitution agreed to by them. In such circumstances, Mountbatten was sent to India. On November 14, 1968, Mountbatten, delivering the Second Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Lecture at Cambridge, stated that he was sent "to expedite the withdrawal" and was given the power to make his own decisions in India and that he was given "plenipotentiary powers."

There was controversy over treating the 'Interim Government' as 'Dominion Government'. Wavell's letter to the Congress President, Azad, and the statement of the Secretary of State for India in the House of Lords on March 13, 1947, had made it clear that "the Interim Government would not have the same powers as a Dominion Government",

31. The Hindustan Times (New Delhi), November 15, 1968.
but HMG would "give it the greatest possible freedom in the day-to-day exercise of the administration of the country." The Congress Working Committee which met on March 8, 1947 resolved that transfer of power should be made to the Interim Government deeming it "Dominion Government with effective control over the services and administration" and converting the Viceroy into its "constitutional head." If this scheme was practised, the Congress Centre kept all the existing powers without devolution of authority to the provinces and denying the Indian states to have authority in matters of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications. In this way the Congress aimed to preserve the unity of India. Since the Congress dominated the Interim Government, the acceptance of the Congress plan could have established a Hindu Raj after Independence, which Jinnah could never tolerate, and it was a betrayal of the British pledges to the League and the Princes.


33. Ibid., pp. 899-900.


Further, it would have had a very hot discussion between the Labour and the Conservatives. Mountbatten conceived this problem and, hence, was granted the plenipotentiary powers. Thus, Mountbatten "came to India with a freer hand to make and to implement policy than any proconsul before him in the history of British India."

Louis' Mountbatten, the nineteenth and the last Viceroy, reached New Delhi on March 22, 1947 accompanied by his own staff, including General Lord Ismay, as Chief of the Viceroy's Staff, Sir Eric Mieville, as Principal Secretary, Captain R.V. Brockman, as Personal Secretary better known as Private Secretary, George Abell, as Public Secretary, Lt. Col. Baskine Crum as Conference Secretary, V.P. Menon as Reforms Secretary, and Allan Campbell-Johnson as Press Attache. The new Viceroy was greatly welcomed by the Congress. Since Nehrus had good relations with Mountbatten, Lord Ismay had already warned the British Government that Mountbatten's appointment as Viceroy would be considered as a favour to the Congress, and an affront to the Muslim League. Jinnah had no such relationship with the Mountbattens as Nehru.

36. Ibid., p. 250.
37. See for details V.P. Menon, op. cit., p. 352.
Mountbatten met Wavell the day he arrived, and discussed the political situation in India. Wavel briefed Mountbatten what happened since the Mission left and the conflict between the Congress and the League members in the Interim Government. Between April 1947 and June 1948, there was only a gap of fifteen months. Mountbatten noted that the Indian leaders were not realising the problem of transfer of power before June, 1948. Wavell wondered "whether the partition of Punjab and Bengal could take place inside the Cabinet Mission's plan." Mountbatten said that he would like to transfer power to some strong authority in India and that "any solution must be based on the Indian Army." Mountbatten realised that the Indian leaders were not appreciating the sincerity of the British Government in the transfer of power in view of statement of P.C. Joshi, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, that "the British had no real intention of leaving."

However, at the swearing-in-ceremony on the morning of March 24, the Viceroy, addressing his audience said: "I

am under no illusion about the difficulty of my task...
I shall need greatest goodwill of the greatest possible number and I am asking India today for that goodwill."
Wavell left New Delhi the next day. In the afternoon, Mountbatten met Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan. He had already written to Gandhi and Jinnah to meet him in New Delhi at their earliest convenience. Gandhiji met him on March 31 and April 4, and Jinnah on April 5.

The Viceroy, without loss of time, started collecting an overall information about the political ideas of the Indian leaders of all communities, Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Parsees. He quickly observed that the real powers and decisive forces were the Congress led by Gandhiji, Nehru and the Congress Party "boss" Sardar Patel, and the Muslim League solely led by M.A. Jinnah and his right-hand man, Liaquat Ali Khan. Meeting with each leader lasted for one hour and the discussions were immediately recorded.

Later when Mountbatten met Nehru, he asked Nehru about his estimates of Jinnah. Nehru presented him as

a "monster of negativism, a man who would agree to noth­
ing because it might split his followers if he did." Thus,
Nehru showed his hatred for Jinnah, understimating his
real position. Nehru also spoke of him "with mingled
respect and loathing." About India's remaining within
Commonwealth after Independence, Nehru wondered how it
could remain within it. Instead of partition, Nehru pro­
posed "relationship between the Centre and the provinces,
and the right of the provinces to associate with each
other on grounds of politics, propinquity or religious
faith." However Mountbatten realised that the Congress
was "grouping for a formula" which might keep India inside
the Commonwealth. Nehru was surprised to learn that "the
British intended to withdraw all their officers in the
army and the civil service regardless of how far the
nationalisation process had progressed." The Viceroy
conveyed to Pethick-Lawrence that Nehru wanted to retain
the services of the British officers for some time after

43. Viceroy's Interviews Nos. 3, 20 and 39, March 24,
April 1 and 8, 1947, N. Mansergh, Transfer of Power,

44. Ibid.

45. Mountbatten's Interview with Nehru, March 24, 1947,
power was transferred. Since Mountbatten considered that whichever authority would control 'an unified army, or the most efficient divided army' would control India, the question of the future of Indian army had become his biggest bargaining point with the Congress. However, Nehru emphasised the need for the partition of Punjab and Bengal and Mountbatten assured to Nehru "to approach the problem in an atmosphere of stark realism." It may be noted that, on the one hand, the Congress was pleading for partition, and on the other, Gandhi was declaring in Bihar that "he could not give consent to the idea of partitioning Punjab and Bengal or any other province." He was afraid that partition would make the communal trouble a permanent features.


49. The Tribune (Lahore), March 14, 1947 (Gandhi's Speech on March 13, 1947).
Maulana Azad was invited by the Viceroy to meet him on March 27, 1947. Azad expressed hope that there was still possibility of a United India under the Cabinet Mission Plan and requested the Viceroy to deflate Jinnah "partly by flattering him and partly because he really has nothing to stand on."

Mountbatten had met Patel on March 25, 1947 who talked on lines of his March 9 speech in which he said that power should be transferred to the Central Government "as it then stood," and if there was to be any conflict in the Cabinet the majority would rule, and also reiterated Nehru's views. Mountbatten had already heard about Gandhi's Patna speech delivered on March 13, 1947, in which he had opposed the partition of India. When Gandhi reached Delhi, on March 31, Azad met him. Gandhi forcefully said that the partition would be over his dead body. So long as he was alive, he would never agree to the partition of India. After the Viceroy's meeting, Patel met Gandhi and they talked for two hours. Later, when Azad


met Gandhiji he found that Gandhiji had changed his view and supported Patel's opinion that partition was inevitable. Earlier Patel, addressing a public meeting in Lucknow, had said, "The earth may split and the heavens may fall, but India will not be divided." But now he had changed his arguments. Thus, the opinion of the Congress leaders was fast changing and wide rift had come up between the Congress ranks. Mountbatten concluded that partition had become inevitable as the Congress and the Muslim League both argued for the same.

Mountbatten met Gandhiji at five separate meetings from March 31 to April 4, 1947. During discussion, Gandhiji proposed that Jinnah should be asked to form a Cabinet and if he accepted his offer, he should be assured of Congress cooperation so long as his all measures were in the interests of the Indian people with Mountbatten as a sole referee. He suggested that no National Guards were to be there, not even private army and Jinnah would be free to present for acceptance a scheme of Pakistan, even before the transfer of power.

Mountbatten on April 2, suggested Gandhiji the transfer of power "to the areas in accordance with the

53. Ibid.
wishes of the majority of the residents in those areas."

"Broadly speaking this could make a Hindu India with a Congress Government in India, a truncated Pakistan, and the large States like Mysore, Travancore, Kashmir, Hyderabad and groups of States, each having separate power turned over to them, owing allegiance to a Central authority for Defence, External Affairs, Communications, and possibly food." Gandhiji was convinced, but he persisted that whatever decision be taken should be implemented as early as possible. The Viceroy informed Azad accordingly. Azad felt the greatest shock of his life. However, he met Gandhi on April 2, and was surprised and grieved that Gandhi "began to repeat the arguments which Sardar Patel had already used." Azad writes that he pleaded with Gandhiji for over two hours "but could make no impression on him."

The withdrawal of the British was to give the problem of Defence. Since partition of India into Pakistan and Hindustan was possible only if law and order and defence arrangement was ensured in both the regions, the


question of division of army became an important problem. Therefore, considering the defence implications, the Chiefs of Staff (India) at a meeting on April 1, 1947, resolved that expenditure on the maintenance of two separate defence forces for Hindustan and Pakistan would increase since "the administrative overheads must be duplicated and there is no flexibility." The important problem was that in that case "it will be impossible for Pakistan to maintain defence forces of the proper size" and "it will be impossible to find the necessary officers and technicians for many years" and it will not be possible for India to afford the "duplicate administrative layout." Therefore, it was considered that "the proposal to have separate defence forces for Pakistan and Hindustan was economically wasteful and quite impracticable, since Pakistan was in fact quite incapable of maintaining the forces required. This problem was also being considered by the Muslim League, the Congress and the Viceroy as a major step before partition of the country. The Muslim League claimed that the Defence Forces should be divided.

58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
Jinnah in a statement said "The transfer of power to Pakistan and Hindustan Governments must mean division of the defence as a sine qua non of such a transfer and the defence forces should be completely divided ... and the states of Pakistan and Hindustan should be made absolutely free, independent and sovereign. This is a clear cut road and the only practical solution of India's constitutional problem."

Mountbatten invited Liaquat Ali Khan to meet him on April 3, 1947. The Viceroy charged that the Muslim League was responsible for all the disturbances in several provinces in order to advance their demand for Pakistan and strongly said that "they should either resign or refrain from taking any active part in the Committee of Action." The Viceroy asked whether the League would agree to the Cabinet Mission Plan if the Congress would accept it. Liaquat Ali Khan's reply was in negative because of the lack of the spirit of compromise with the Congress.

Liaquat Ali Khan explained that there was no possibility of the establishment of a unitary government


under the Cabinet Mission Plan, but regarding transfer of power, he gave such a statement, which later made Jinnah to accept a truncated Pakistan. Discussion with Liaquat Ali Khan also revealed to Mountbatten that the Muslim League would accept even the smaller size of Pakistan rather than comprising of six provinces and Calcutta. If Jinnah was interviewed first, he certainly had demanded the larger Pakistan and Liaquat Ali Khan had to follow suit.

Mountbatten informed Lord Listowel, the Secretary of State for India about the Indian situation, who cautioned him that he had to face the toughest Jinnah "whose Pakistan Day message suggests that even in the new circumstances he does not contemplate a conciliatory move, at any rate in the first instance." Agreeing on some points he wrote to the Viceroy that:

"...in spite of its grave practical difficulties and dangers, the partition of the Punjab to such degree and in such form as will satisfy the rival nationalisms in the Province is really unavoidable

62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
from the political point of view of the transfer of authority in June, 1948. If, however, we were to go for partition in the Punjab, we should, I think, have to go for it also in Bengal for broadly similar reasons." 64

Nehru had bad tastes during the Interim Government formed by him. He was quite sure to become Prime Minister of Independent India. Hence, he was shocked to know that Gandhiji offered the Prime Ministership to Jinnah. Nehru criticised that since Gandhiji was out of Delhi for four months, he did not know the present events at the Centre. Nehru and Patel did their best to satisfy Gandhiji that partition was necessary. As Gandhiji did not agree to their views, Nehru and Patel began to isolate him from the Congress Policies. Had Gandhi's proposal was conveyed to Jinnah, it was quite possible that it had some effect on Jinnah's ego and partition was anyhow avoided. However, Nehru during the course of discussion told to the Viceroy that Gandhiji's offer was "quite impracticable."

65. Stanley Wolpert, Jinnah of Pakistan, op.cit., p.316.
After talking with the Congress leaders and Liaquat Ali Khan, the Viceroy was fully convinced that the Cabinet Mission Plan had totally died and partition of India was the only problem before him. The Viceroy realised that if Pakistan was created in the East and the West, as demanded by Jinnah, it would be a 'truncated Pakistan' while India still would remain a big dominion, which could, sooner or later, absorb the Muslim Indian States or they would join India willingly or unwillingly owing to their geographical situations. Then he had only to break the hard nut, Jinnah, to come to a definite conclusion regarding partition. Mountbatten prepared a list of 'Awkward Questions to Ask Jinnah', which included, among others, as to how Jinnah would justify "the claim to the thirteen districts in the Punjab and the eight districts (including Calcutta) of Bengal which did not have a Muslim majority", and how he would organise defence of Pakistan in view of strained resources and whether he would like to have a defensive alliance with Hindustan. Further, the Viceroy, as expressed by Nehru on March 24, thought that Jinnah would come down to a settlement for immediate transfer of power in view of the inflexibility of the


time-limit by June 1948. If Jinnah persisted for Pakistan, it was a truncated Pakistan and the army was necessarily to 'be divided.' If army was not to be divided, then India had to remain united, which was impossible in those circumstances. But abolishing the centre meant, cutting up the army and delaying the British withdrawal beyond June, 1948, which Mountbatten did not like because it would manifest "the thankless role of an umpire powerless to endorse the rules." Moreover, he wanted to evolve a mechanism to avoid bloodshed after Independence and left no stone unturned to make it clear that the only solution of India's problem was a "surgical operation" of India.

Mountbatten invited Jinnah on April 6, and his sister, Fatima, to dine with him. They had their food till late in the night. During this Jinnah gave a fearful account of Congress atrocities on Muslims and told the Viceroy of his own fear that Congress could do anything to "deprive" him of Pakistan. He said the only way left for the Muslim League was to get Pakistan

70. N. Mansergh, Transfer of Power, Viceroy's Staff Meeting, April 5, 1947, p. 128.
72. Alan Campbell Johnson, op.cit., p. 56.
by force, that is, by direct action which involved 'violence' and 'riots' to prove the reality of his "Two Nation Theory." In spite of these arguments, the Viceroy stuck to his proposal of a unified India, which made Jinnah to realise that all things would not go as he liked and he was unable to influence the Viceroy.

Mountbatten and Jinnah met again in the afternoon of April 7, while the Viceroy, tried by every means to get Jinnah agreed to the Cabinet Mission Plan and enter the Constituent Assembly, he remained adamant, and said:

"That was impossible, it was quite valueless entering the Constituent Assembly or trying to go back to the Cabinet Mission Plan since the whole of that plan was co-operation and mutual trust. Now a year later, the atmosphere, far from improving, had taken a serious turn for the worse and it was clear that Congress had no intention of accepting either the spirit or the letter of that plan." 75

However, Jinnah's demand that power should be handed over as soon as possible "preferably Province by

74. Stanley Wolpert, Jinnah of Pakistan, op. cit., p. 318.
75. Ibid., p. 318.
Province, and let the Provinces themselves choose how they formed into groups" was not realistic and it was a programme of Balkanization of India which could never have been beneficial for the people of the provinces. Secondly, there were large number of Hindu majority states encircling the Muslim majority states in the South, such as Nizam of Hyderabad, in the North, Rampur, and in the Central India, Bhopal. In these three provinces, the majority of inhabitants were non-Muslims. The ruler of Kashmir was a Hindu and the majority of the population was that of Muslims. However, in the East, East Bengal and Sylhet, the Muslim majority areas, and in the West, West Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and NWFP could join to form Pakistan. Jinnah wanted to create Pakistan in the heart of India, which could never be agreed upon by the Congress. The Viceroy was also convinced that it could be the cause of perpetual conflict ending in the merger of Hyderabad, Rampur and Bhopal into India vanishing Jinnah's dream of a larger Pakistan.

Jinnah forgot the Congress claim that Punjab and Bengal should be partitioned due to majority of Hindus

76. Manmath Nath Das, op.cit., p. 83.
in East Punjab and West Bengal and that it would be injustice to leave the Hindus on the mercy of the Muslims of Pakistan, to which the Congress would never agree. Jinnah could not calculate the depth of the intense situation going against him and thought the Congress claim as "bluff" to frighten him in order to force him accept the Cabinet Mission Plan. As the matter could not be settled, Jinnah, as a sole spokesman of Muslim India, demanded a settlement by a British award, provided 'Pakistan' was accepted in principle with the right to maintain its separate army. On the question of 'Defence', Jinnah said that "he had come to the conclusion that the Defence forces must be separated and that Pakistan and Hindustan must be responsible separately for their own defence. On no other basis would it be possible to have any form of central organisation on terms of parity." Liaquat Ali Khan also informed Mountbatten on April 7, 1947, that a Pakistan without an army would collapse like a 'house of cards.' Jinnah as a shrewed politician knew that it would be impossible for the Viceroy to divide the army and partition

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78. Ibid., p. 152.
of India before June 1948, and, thus, a permanent settle­ment would be delayed and the Viceroy's Mission would be unsuccessful. But the Viceroy had plenipotentiary powers and was determined to transfer power by that time. Mountbatten, as a man of great wisdom, felt the inner motive of Jinnah. Therefore, the Viceroy made it clear that it would be impossible to cut the army into half by June, 1948, and the time table could not be delayed. This came to Jinnah as a "shock." Jinnah asked as to how they would like to propose the terms for leaving India by June, 1948. Whether they intend to leave India turning the "country over to chaos and bloodshed and civil war?" Mountbatten warned that the Muslim League had either to accept the Mission's proposals or to take its 'Pakistan' carved out of India by partitioning Punjab and Bengal.

Mountbatten told Jinnah that he had decided to recommend to the British Government how best the power could be transferred to the Indians after hearing the views of all major parties and that he would not wait for the parties to reach an "agreement" in view of the date


already set. Jinnah became anxious as he had agreed to abide by the decision of the Viceroy and he had no power of veto. Seeing Jinnah thoughtful, the Viceroy imagined the fall of the Muslim leader into his own net of earlier arguments. To bring him to the most delicate problem, the Viceroy asked Jinnah as to what was his solution if he was in his (Viceroy's) place. Jinnah immediately said that he would have accepted the demand for Pakistan and the splitting of the Defence Forces. Acceptance of Pakistan meant 'partition of India' and splitting of 'Defence Forces' meant 'creation of two powers', that is, India and Pakistan. Thereafter, Mountbatten asked Jinnah to put forward his arguments for partition. Jinnah reiterated the two-nation theory, which implied that the Muslim majority areas would like to join Pakistan and the Hindu majority areas would like to join Hindustan and it was quite injustice to put the Muslim majority areas at the mercy of Hindustan and vice-versa. On this Mountbatten pointed out that his remarks "applied also to the partition of the Punjab and Bengal, and that by sheer logic if I accepted his (Jinnah's) arguments in the case of India as a whole, I had also to apply them in the case of these two provinces." Thus, the

Viceroy offered only a "moth eaten Pakistan." Jinnah became very upset, dismayed and distressed, because by partitioning these two provinces he could not be in a stronger position to bargain with Hindustan. Appalled by the Viceroy's firm determination, Jinnah begged the Viceroy "not to destroy the unity of Bengal and the Punjab, which had national characteristics in common; common history, common ways of life; and where the Hindus have stronger feelings as Bengalis or Punjabis than they have as members of the Congress." Mountbatten put the second pressure on Jinnah by insisting that "what was good for the Muslims was good also for other communities." Jinnah still did not believe that the two provinces would really be partitioned. Therefore, he said: "this demand for partitioning the Punjab and Bengal was a bluff on the part of Congress to try and frighten him off Pakistan. He was not to be frightened off so easily." In a statement Jinnah said "The Hindus have their homelands ... consisting of six vast provinces purely because a portion of the minorities in the Pakistan provinces have taken up this attitude, the

82. Ibid.


84. Mountbatten 191, Interview No.41, April 8,1947; See also N. Mansergh, Transfer of Power, Vol.X, op.cit., pp. 159-60; See also H.V. Hodson, op.cit., p.227.
British Government should not now continece it because the result of that will be logically, that all other provinces will have to be cut up in a similar way, which will be dangerous....'

Jinnah met Mountbatten again and appealed to the Viceroy not to give him a "moth eaten" and "truncated Pakistan." But the Viceroy was adamant and replied:

"I simply could not visualise being so inconsistent as to agree to the partition of India without also agreeing to partition with in any provinces in which the same problem arose."

However, though Jinnah's high hopes of a grand Pakistan were razed to the ground and he was feeling secluded. He, being a man of great courage and ambition, wanted to be successful in achieving Pakistan in any way.

April 10 was an important landmark in the history of partition of India when Mountbatten and Jinnah discussed for three hours on the future destiny of the country. Jinnah demanded 'viable' Pakistan. The Viceroy said that

87. Ibid.
he was bound to work on principles and that he would like to discuss only on the limitations of Pakistan, which would be "a state containing Sind, half of the Punjab, and probably the North-West Frontier Province in one group, and part of Bengal in an other group."

Since the adoption of Lahore Resolution in 1940, the Muslim League and Jinnah were demanding Muslim right to self-determination. In view of this, the 'right to self-determination' could not be denied to the substantial non-Muslim minorities living in contiguous districts in the Punjab and Bengal. Jinnah threatened to demand a partition of Assam if the Congress insisted on the partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Mountbatten said that the League's claim on Assam would be considered on the same merits as Congress's claims on parts of the Punjab and Bengal. Jinnah knew that in Assam, Sylhet was the only Muslim majority state, which, if included in Pakistan, would still make a 'moth-eaten Pakistan'. As he wanted a larger and stronger Pakistan, he retorted on a different line and said that


to avoid partition of India power should be transferred
to the provinces. Ayesha Jalal says: "This was a line
which fitted in well with the interests of his consti­
tuents in the Muslim provinces, but his weakness relative
to them had made him nervous of pushing it." However,
Jinnah demanded that, after transfer of power, the pro­
vinces would then decide as to what groups they should
join—whether Hindustan or Pakistan Constituent Assemblies.
If Mountbatten had accepted this demand, the partition of
India could have been avoided. Further, it was likely
that the Indian states could have joined the Indian consti­
tuent due to encircled by the Indian territories. However,
the remote areas in the East and West could have formed a
strong independent and autonomous body to meet the Congress
challenges at the weak Centre. There was also a possibi­
ility that the Muslim majority states also joined India in
future to form a stronger and larger India with a perpetual
policy of keeping peace, friendship and cooperation between
the Hindus and the Muslims. Thus the continued riots and
bloodshed could have been avoided. Truly, by his proposal,
Jinnah wanted to avoid the partition of the Punjab and
Bengal, but Mountbatten did not like to include the Hindu


91. Ibid.
majority areas in the Muslim sovereign states. Therefore, the Viceroy insisted that the Hindu majority areas from Bengal and the Punjab should be separated to meet the Congress demand. Whether Mountbatten be charged that he favoured the Congress demand as he was a close friend of the Nehrus? If not, why Mountbatten did not persuade the Congress to accept Jinnah's proposal without partitioning the Punjab and Bengal. This, to some extent, infers that Mountbatten failed to understand the inner motive of Jinnah that India should not be partitioned. But the Viceroy's insistence made the partition of these two provinces inevitable which resulted also in the partition of India into Hindustan and Pakistan.

However, on Jinnah's proposal for transfer of power to provinces, Mountbatten invited Jinnah to help him in working out the mechanics of a scheme which could ensure cutting out the Muslim majority districts from the Punjab and Bengal and transfer of Power to them. Jinnah refused to assist and involve himself in the execution as he could

92. Philip Ziegler, op.cit., p. 367; See also the Manchester Guardian, February 25, 1947; Lord Ismay warned the British Government that Mountbatten's appointment would be considered a concession to the Congress and an affront to the Muslims; see A Campbell-Johnson, op.cit., p. 23; See also Leonard Mosley, p. 102.
be blamed and held responsible for the vivisection of India. Mountbatten was shrewd enough to lay this responsibility on Jinnah and shirk this prosecution from his own shoulders. Jinnah plainly said that he did not want vivisection of India and partition of the Punjab and Bengal but transfer of power to undivided provinces. Jinnah asked the Viceroy to see the Congress proposals regarding the partitioning of the Punjab and Bengal. By saying so he aimed to lay the responsibility of partitioning of the two provinces on the Congress. Jinnah, requested the Viceroy "not to spell out the procedure to be adopted in determining the will of the provinces," but the Viceroy warned that the Quaid-i-Azam was in danger of throwing away the "substance for the shadow", getting "an almost unworkable truncated Pakistan which would still be obliged to share a common organization at the Centre to arrange overall defence." This comment of the Viceroy is an adequate evidence of his favouritism to the 'Congress will' for partitioning the Punjab and Bengal.


94. Ibid., p. 188.
Jinnah, feeling that the Viceroy was determined to the scheme of partitioning the Punjab and Bengal, demanded the partition of Assam also. The Viceroy agreed to this demand. Jinnah demanded also that without Calcutta Pakistan would be economically very uncertain and unworkable. The Viceroy agreed to it also. The Viceroy asked Jinnah as to why he was not prepared "to accept the Cabinet Mission Plan, which gave him the whole of the Punjab, the whole of Bengal including Calcutta and the whole of Sind with complete autonomy ... a really worthwhile and workable Pakistan." The Viceroy tried to convince Jinnah that under the Cabinet Mission Plan, there would be a limited, weak and joint Centre at Delhi and he would be able to control Defence, Communication and External Affairs while he would also enjoy virtual independence in all his provinces. He said that he did not believe in the Congress leadership and it would be difficult for the autonomous Pakistan under the Cabinet Mission Plan to work with such freedom as was held out in theory. He was afraid that since there was no constitution agreed upon by the Congress and the Muslim League, the Hindus being in majority in most of the provinces would be able to change the weak centre into a

95. Mountbatten, 191, Interview No.46, Jinnah, April 10, 1947. Ibid.
strong centre. It may be inferred from the discussion that Jinnah was fighting a losing battle.

On April 11, when Mountbatten told Nehru that Jinnah had demanded partition of Assam also. The latter gave his consent forthwith as "this was a perfectly reasonable request and could easily be agreed to." Likewise Liaquat Ali Khan also stated: "I would in no circumstances prevent the Provinces from being partitioned if I accepted the principle of Pakistan." He also said: "If your Excellency was prepared to let the Muslim League have only the Sind desert, I would still be prepared to accept it." Patel still hoped that Jinnah would accept the Cabinet Mission Plan because the people of the Punjab and Bengal might revolt against partition of their provinces. Azad expressed grief that Jinnah refused to accept the Cabinet Mission Plan which also gave him the right to secede from the rest of India after ten years. Azad felt that the truncated Pakistan would be a disaster for the Mussalmans.

98. H.V. Hodson, op.cit., p. 224.
Mountbatten, on April 11, 1947, fully realised that the Congress accepted Pakistan with the partition of the Punjab and the Bengal, and Jinnah could be forced to accept the truncated Pakistan. The Viceroy needed the declared parties to negotiate with regard to the settlement.

Mountbatten, as he was a man of quick inference and judgment, decided to take a quick decision at this stage. Mountbatten, to bring the Congress and the League leaders, the difficult contenders from "emotionalism to stark realism" set out alternative proposals with hard terms, that is, either a Balkan Plan - a transfer of power to provinces severely to decide their future or divide the Punjab and Bengal creating a truncated Pakistan.

The events in India and the question of permanent settlement were thoroughly thrashed out at the Staff Meeting held on April 11, 1947, while Mountbatten conceded that "there was no possibility of shifting Jinnah from his position, and that without his agreement unity could only be imposed on India by force of arms." Mountbatten

discovered this reality quickly and that the solution was imposed on him. However, he reluctantly accepted the partition of India. The Staff Meeting recorded that the Viceroy said:

"...he wanted a most careful preamble to be written making it clear that his view had all along been completely impartial; that it was only when it became apparent that the retention of any form of a united India would start civil war that he had regretfully been obliged to give up this idea; and that he had therefore chosen a means which gave the choice of their future, as well as the somewhat primitive democratic machinery could allow, to the Indian people themselves."

Mountbatten devised a plan as follows:

"the members of the Legislative Assemblies of Bengal and the Punjab should meet separately in two parts i.e., representatives of the predominantly Muslim areas, and representatives of the predominantly non-Muslim areas; and if both sections of each of these Assemblies voted for partition, then that province would be partitioned. Under the plan, in the event of the partition of Bengal, the predominantly Muslim

district of Sylhet in Assam would have the option of joining the Muslim province."

By mid of April, the Viceroy was sure that partition was inevitable but it was not clear as to what would be the form and how it would be achieved. Before his arrival, the Indian leaders except Gandhiji and Azad, had already decided for it. Two weeks before the Viceroy's arrival, the Congress Working Committee had approved a resolution which envisaged the division of the Punjab. Nehru told Michael Brecher that "partition had become inevitable a year before it happened." Jinnah was mouthing the sentiments about Indian unity, but, in fact, the cause was lost. The Viceroy asked Ismay to prepare a plan for the partition of India, which could be acceptable in practice to everyone concerned.

As directed by the Viceroy, on April 11, 1947, Ismay drew up an outline for the transfer of power, the

104. Michael Brecher, op.cit., p. 375.
main features of which "was the dimension of authority to the provinces, or to such confederations of provinces as might decide to group themselves in the intervening period before the actual transfer of power." Ismay sent the draft to V.P. Menon, an agent and mouthpiece of Nehru, for his amendments and working out a rough time-table. Menon, carrying out the order, appended his own opinion that the plan was "a bad one and certainly would not work."

The finished plan was placed before the Governor's Conference called by Mountbatten on April 15-16, 1947, to discuss the matter of the transfer of power to the Indian leaders.

A day before the Governor's Conference the Punjab Governor Sir Even Jenkins met Ismay, Mieville, Weightman and Abell and expressed that the partition of Punjab would mean an 'immediate blow up' and would be disastrous to the province, involving a huge military operation. The Governor of Bengal, Sir Frederick Burrows, said that partition of

105. Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, op.cit., p. 291.
106. Ibid.
107. V.P. Menon, op.cit., p. 354.
the province "would reduce Eastern Bengal to a 'rural
slum'." Mountbatten became more determined to implement
his plan although the Governor were against the partition.
On the other hand, "The greater the insistence by Jinnah
on his province-wise Pakistan, the stronger was the Cong­
ress demand that he should not be allowed to carry unwill­
ing minorities with him." On April 17, the Viceroy wrote
to the Secretary of State that a "partition is probably
inevitable." He continued:

"This opens a new vista, since now we could go
ahead giving Mr. Jinnah his truncated Pakistan
whilst keeping a strong Centre for the rest of
India at Delhi; all this on the assumption that
the N.W.F.P. remains a Congress Government and
that the Muslim League will not want the expense
of trying to run a Province which needs $3 \frac{1}{2}
crores spent on it over and above its income
(mostly for the tribes) and that Suhrawardy will
not agree to the partition of Bengal and will
throw in his lot with Congress."

110. Ibid.
111. Mountbatten 120, Viceroy to Secretary of State,
April 17, 1947. See N. Mansergh, Transfer of Power
Jinnah, disagreeing with the Viceroy's proposal, said: "this is your scheme not mine."

All this was worrying Liaquat Ali Khan, who demanded an acceptable solution, and requested the Viceroy to use his influence to bring considerable pressure on the two parties to agree to a plan produced by him in order to get them out of their 'present impasse.' When the Viceroy suggested to modify the "Mission's plan to allow for a central defence authority which would be supported by taxing the various groups according to their populations and the size of the armies they required" Liaquat Ali Khan jumped with joy thinking that the plan would allow also all the Indian states to remain within the Commonwealth for a period of five years. He completely supported the proposal in view of League's 'phobia' against the word 'Cabinet Mission.' Ayesha Jalal says that the League also feared that "the Congress could easily deploy its numerical strength to frame a constitution providing for a strong Central Government. Without parity for the League

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in the Central Government constitutional safeguards were simply promises on paper. There would be nothing to prevent the centre from interfering in the Muslim provinces; the Congress might use the Indian army to discipline the Muslim provinces, and, worse still, squeeze their domestic economies to raise finances to run the centre."

Observing the emotions of Liaquat Ali Khan, the Viceroy assessed that Liaquat Ali Khan would be helpful in finding "a more reasonable solution than this mad Pakistan."

The situation in the NWFP by that time had completely changed against the Congress. Therefore, the Viceroy decided that the will of the people should be respected. To solve the problem, he also decided to hold a referendum instead of elections, but the Congress believed that the party would be in the loss of province.

However, Nehru "accepted the referendum without much demur." He demanded that Caroe, the Governor of NWFP, must go and he went. Mountbatten said that if Caroe was present, "it would have been impossible to carry through

the referendum." As the Viceroy intervened, an order was issued to release the League prisoners, but, backed by Jinnah, they refused to accept freedom. After Mountbatten's departure from the province, the Muslim League started its agitation of civil disobedience again with such a ferocity that the Viceroy felt that if power would not be transferred soon, there would be no authority to whom power could be transferred. All this compelled Nehru to declare:

"The Muslim League can have Pakistan, if they wish to have it, but on the condition that they do not take away other parts of India which do not wish to join Pakistan."

Nehru categorically told the Viceroy that "there was no question of the High Command accepting a centre where Congress would share power with the League on the basis of equality between the "two" and that Congress would not share power at all. Nehru also said that the Congress "would not tolerate any deal by which it joined the League and Pakistan at an all-India level." Thus, decisive

118. V.P. Menon, op.cit., p. 354.
deterioration of the Congress was 'partition' and not of the Viceroy.

The urgent question before the Viceroy was how to grant some form of Dominion Status during 1947 if the Cabinet Mission Plan was not accepted. He decided that there should be some form of Pakistan. But since the Congress did not agree to Dominion Status the Viceroy was unable to recommend to His Majesty's Government any proposal. Had the two sides agreed to the Commonwealth proposal, the partition had become easy.

On April 23, Jinnah, pressing his last lever, proposed the division of army though he knew that it was impossible before June, 1948. He hoped that by this delaying tactics, Congress would come to terms and 'all inter-communal feeling would subside and Hindustan and Pakistan would be able to come together and work out the details.' On one hand, he wanted to maintain a parity, and, on the other, he desired the India's army to 'march shoulder to shoulder, to discipline the common enemies of the Congress

and the League beyond the sub-continent's border." He argued that India and Pakistan would not be able to stand alone against a powerful aggressor. Jinnah hoped to arrive at an ultimate goal of parity by having parity over external defence. Jinnah also realised that in case of division on communal lines, India will retain a moth-eaten and truncated army because the Muslim regiments of the Punjab, which have the mainstay of India since the last ninety years, would be separated and they would prefer to join Pakistan.

On April 24, Mountbatten reported that Jinnah's demand of parity over external affairs with common arrangements with Hindustan and parity in terms of land and air forces had put Jinnah into a 'ridiculous situation.

On April 25, Patel said to the Viceroy that the Congress had "reached the maximum limit of their concessions" and, hence, "(a) Congress would not accept any suggestion for a further degree of parity for the present Central Government; (b) if the Muslim League did not accept the

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123. Ibid.
Cabinet Mission's Plan, Congress desired partition." Nehru also declared "Our aim is to liberate as much of India as we can, and then to deal with the question of the independence for the rest." Nehru also reiterated that the Punjab and Bengal had no alternative save partition.

At the ninth miscellaneous meeting on May 1, 1947, the Viceroy believed that the Cabinet Mission Plan was still alive, but Jinnah repeatedly stated that he did not accept it on the grounds that the Congress 'did not intend to carry it out fairly.' The Viceroy stated that Jinnah was frightened with the prospect of a Centre permanently dominated by the Hindus. Mountbatten and his senior colleagues were convinced that Jinnah's fear had some foundation and it led to the rejection of the Cabinet Plan. Jinnah insisted on Parity, but Patel warned the Viceroy that if he would raise the question of parity he would

125. Ibid., p. 337.
126. Ibid.
129. Ibid., pp. 507-508.
have to incur the everlasting enmity of Congress. He said that he would never agree to this for which he had been fighting since long. Ayesha Jalal rightly infers that "It was Congress that insisted on partition. It was Jinnah who was against partition." Seeing all this the Viceroy concluded that the Cabinet Mission Plan was dead and he had to plan for the partition of India.

Jinnah rejected the partition proposal and called for the transfer of power to the provinces as they were then constituted. He urged the Viceroy "not to fall into the "trap" set up by the Congress and "commit a grave error." The Viceroy was not sure whether Jinnah's attitude was "due to fear of his own followers or merely his maddening methods of bargaining." Further, Gandhi who

was once the greatest opponent of partition, had agreed to Nehru and Patel in proposing partition provided it involved the partition of Bengal and Punjab. Moreover the Congress Working Committee had also "virtually accepted the outline of the plan." In view of the Congress firm determination for getting partition of the Punjab and Bengal, the Viceroy realised that Jinnah had become powerless to prevent partition of India.

Mountbatten wanted a formula within ten days to send Ismay with the plan by the end of the month to London for acceptance by the British Cabinet and to call a conference of the Indian leaders at Simla on May 15. There were "almost innumerable alternative drafts" and each formula have the same design, that is, partition of India with some form of Supreme Defence Council hoping that one day a federal India would emerge. Mountbatten appointed a committee consisting of the Viceroy, Ismay, Abell and Mieville, for drafting an acceptable formula by all the

parties. They adopted the following formula and sent it to London with Ismay and Abell on May 2, 1947. The formula laid down that Pakistan was inevitable. The division would involve district-wise partition of the Punjab and Bengal, and the appointment of a boundary commission. The formula also stated that before the division has taken place members of the Legislative Assemblies of the provinces concerned should be given the opportunity to decide whether they would prefer to remain in the Indian Union or have a separate state for their areas. If the M.L.As. decided in favour of Partition then they would be asked to elect new representatives to a Constituent Assembly or Constituent Assemblies for their joint or separate areas on the basis of one representative for each million. The present Constituent Assembly for the Indian Union will remain intact. Only the members representing the partition areas would cease to be its members.

Though the Viceroy kept the formula 'most secret', it was published in The Hindu, on May 2, and in The Hindustan Times on May 3. Since the Plan was published, it was commented by various newspapers and it had become

137. Manmath Nath Das, op.cit., p. 91.
a matter of wide discussion in the country. On May 3, the Viceroy reported to the Secretary of State:

That the Congress had agreed for the division of the country but the division should be absolute and complete since that alone would give the majority of the people of India the opportunity of building up a powerful State with a strong centre. The Viceroy further drew the attention of the Secretary of State that there must be partition of the Punjab and Bengal giving chance to the non-Muslim areas to join the Indian Union. Since violence had become a part of politics Congress objected to its use, in the North-West Frontier Province the Punjab and Assam to settle political issues.

The Viceroy further told the Secretary of State that the Congress had no objection to a separate Constituent Assembly or Assemblies being summoned for those areas that choose to stand out of the Indian Union but it desired that such areas should decide for themselves whether they would remain independent or form union with other parts.

Mountbatten in this communication to London had also urged that His Majesty's approval should be communi-

cated to him by May 10. Meanwhile, the Viceroy planned to call a meeting of the Indian leaders of all the important parties on May 17, to ascertain their views on his proposals, which may be considered the first stage towards the process of the partition scheme.

Mountbatten's plan, which Ismay and Abell presented in London on May 3, provided for "partition, with Bengal and the Punjab having the option of being split between India and Pakistan, joining in entirely with either state, or going it alone." The plan had left the position of the Princely states quite obscure giving them the right to decide their own future. The parliamentary draftsmen in London changed the Viceroy's plan to some extent. First, the revised plan, besides giving different parts of India to decide their own future, included the proposal that the N.W.F.P. should also be allowed to opt for independence, which was opposed both by the Muslim League and the Congress.

From London the Viceroy received the amended plan a week later and showed it to the leaders a day before


140. Ibid.
the meeting on May 17, so that they should not get much
time for suggesting amendments. But, having friendly terms
with Nehru, Mountbatten gave the revised plan to Nehru
in the night of May 10, when he was going to bed. Nehru,
being anxious, read the plan at midnight and found it
quite unacceptable. Nehru woke up Krishna Menon and the
two wrote a letter to Mountbatten up to 4.00 A.M. Next
morning, the Viceroy received the letter which he referred
as 'Nehru bombshell' in his diary. Nehru had charged
vehemently:

"The whole approach was completely different
from what ours had been, and the picture of
India that emerged frightened me. In fact
much that we had done so far was undermined
and the Cabinet Mission's scheme and subse­
quent developments were set aside, and an
entirely new picture presented a picture of
fragmentation and conflict and disorder,
and, unhappily also, of a worsening of
relations between India and Britain."

Nehru also observed that the proposals invited the
Balkanisation of India, provoked certain civil conflict

142. Nehru to Mountbatten, May 11, 1947, N.Mensergh,
and 'disorder', and broke the Central authority which alone could prevent the chaos that was growing and, demoralising the army, the police, and the central services. Seeing Nehru's note, Mountbatten was stunned. "It was one of the worst blow he had suffered in his life," and "for a few hours he was as close to despair as he had ever been." Patel demanded that all power should be transferred to the Central Government as the London approval had no force.

Nehru hoped that Jinnah would accept the proposal but, contrarily, Jinnah announced his disagreement to such 'a monstrous proposal' as the one put forward by Mr. Patel to restore peace, which was only a dream of his.

Jinnah demanded the partition of Indian provinces on the basis of population of Muslims and non-Caste Hindus in the Hindu majority provinces, though he knew that it was impossible. He raised this demand only to prevent

143. Ibid.
145. Ibid.
the partition of the Punjab and Bengal, which, he believed, would be absolutely destructive and 'dangerous for the present but more so in the future.'

However, referring the Congress and the League objections to the plan, Mountbatten immediately sent a telegram to the Secretary of State on May 11, suggesting for "redrafting the plan." At this point, Attlee asked Mountbatten to fly home immediately.

Mountbatten left for London on May 19 and he informed Attlee and his Cabinet colleagues that "the Muslim League would resort to arms if Pakistan in some form were not conceded."

Jinnah demanded a 800-mile long "corridor" on May 20 to link West and East Pakistan and wired to the Cabinet that "before Bengal and the Punjab were partitioned a referendum should be held in each province to determine will of its people in this vital regard." The Viceroy rejected it as it could result in delay.

Mountbatten returned to India on May 31, 1947. He drafted a personal message to the people. On June 2, the Viceroy held a meeting in New Delhi with Liaquat, Nishtar, Jinnah, Patel, Kripalani, Nehru, Baldev Singh and gave them the draft of the partition plan to approval of their Working Committees. Nehru and Patel accepted the Plan. Jinnah refused to sign though the Muslim League Working Committee had already authorised him to take any decision he would like suitable. He said that "he and his Working Committee would have to go before their masters, the people, for a final decision." Mountbatten realised that he was using the tactics of delaying the matter. Therefore, he warned Jinnah that there should not be "No" from the Muslim League. In fact, Jinnah did not like to be wholly responsible for the partition. On the same day, Jinnah met the Viceroy at 11.00 P.M. and about the acceptance of the plan, he used the word "hopeful." Mountbatten reports: "I finally asked him whether he felt I would be justified in advising the Prime Minister to go ahead and

150. V.P. Menon, op.cit., p. 374.
The announcement, to which he replied very firmly,
"Yes."

On June 3, Mountbatten called a meeting of the leaders and observed that there was 100% acceptance of the plan. In the course of discussion, as promised, Jinnah nodded his head and also promised to do his best to get the plan accepted by his followers. The Viceroy declared that the Partition Act would be implemented not later than August 15, 1947.

Immediately after the morning conference on June 3, Mountbatten communicated to the Secretary of State that Nehru, Jinnah and Baldev Singh had accepted the partition plan. In consequence, Attlee announced the plan in the House of Commons on June 3, which came to be known "the June 3rd Plan." In the evening of June 3, Mountbatten also broadcast over the All-India Radio. Highlighting the cause of partition, the Viceroy said:

"To my great regret it has been impossible to obtain agreement either on the Cabinet Mission

153. Ibid., p. 117.
Plan, or any plan that would preserve the unity of India. But there can be no question of coercing any large areas in which one community has a majority to live against their will under a Government in which another community has a majority. And the only alternative to coercion is partition. 155

The Viceroy expressed grief on account of the partition and further said: "I am, of course, just as much opposed to the partition of provinces as I am to the partition of India herself." He also said that the people of India should decide the question of partition themselves. He made it clear that though the people of the Punjab, Bengal and part of Assam would lay down the boundaries between India and Pakistan, the ultimate decision would be taken by a Boundary Commission.

The Viceroy's speech was followed by His Majesty's Government's Statement confirming the Plan.


156. Ibid.
After the Viceroy, Nehru, Jinnah and Baldev Singh broadcast their speeches. Nehru said "... it must always be remembered that the future of India can only be decided by the people of India, and not by any outside authority, however, friendly."

Jinnah without giving clear acceptance of the plan, said: "... the plan does not meet in some important respects our point of view, and we cannot say or feel that we are satisfied or that we agree with some of the matters dealt with by the Plan." Jinnah also said that he had called the All-India Muslim League Council to meet on June 9, and was hopeful of the acceptance of the Plan. He also commended Viceroy's "fairness and impartiality." He said that according to paragraph 11 of the Statement, a referendum would be made to the electorates of the then Legislative Assembly in the N.W.F.P. which would decide whether the province would join India or Pakistan.

Baldev Singh accepted the plan reluctantly. On June 4, Mountbatten, addressing a press conference, said

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158. The Dawn (Delhi) June 5, 1947.
159. V.P. Menon, op.cit., p. 380.
that "independence through Dominion Status was complete and that the different administrations were at liberty to opt out of the Commonwealth whenever they pleased."

Mountbatten held a meeting on June 5, with the political leaders in his office, while Jinnah expressed pain that both States would be independent and equal in every respect. On the other side, the Hindu Mahasabha resolved calling for an all-India 'Anti-Pakistan Day.'

On June 7, the Viceroy produced a 33-page document entitled: "The Administrative Consequences of Partition" before the party leaders and formed a Partition Committee consisting of Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Liaquat Ali Khan and Abdur Rab Nishtar with Lord Mountbatten as the Chairman. On June 27, the Committee gave way to partition Council.

The All-India Muslim League's meeting held on June 9-10, 1947 in a resolution said that the only solution of India's problem was to divide India into two-Pakistan and Hindustan. The Council was of the opinion that although 'it cannot agree to the partition of Bengal and

160. Ibid., p. 381.
162. V.P.Menon, op.cit., p. 382.
the Punjab, or give its consent to such partition, it has to consider His Majesty's plan for the transfer of power as a whole. The Council authorised Jinnah, the President of the All-India Muslim League 'to accept the fundamental principles of the plan is a compromise and leave it to him, with full authority, to work out all the details of the plan in an equitable and just manner with regard to carrying out the complete division of India on the basis and fundamental principles embodied in His Majesty's Plan including Defence, Finance and Communication.' But orthodox Mullahs, mighty landed barons and mercantile magnates cried out angrily against the plan calling it "betrayal" and a "tragedy for Pakistan."

At the first meeting of the Interim Government on June 12, the Congress and the League members were almost to fight on the question of appointment of Pandit Nehru's sister, as an ambassador, which was opposed by the League. Mountbatten realised that nature of Indians cannot be assessed and felt fear of the collapse of his plan. Therefore he hurried to make arrangement for transfer of power and to leave India as early as possible. A joint conference

of Sikh organisations in Lahore also accepted the division of the Punjab on June 14. The Bengal Legislative Assembly and Punjab Legislative Assembly, opted partition on June 20 and June 23 respectively. On June 26, Sind Legislative Assembly and Baluchistan Legislative Assembly opted to join Pakistan. In view of these options, Jinnah on June 27, reported to Mountbatten: "Thus, we can now look upon the creation of Pakistan on the 15th August as legally decided upon."

On June 27, Mountbatten invited Jinnah, Liaquat Nehru, Patel and Baldev Singh to discuss this important issue. Two High Court judges were chosen each by the Congress and the League to work as commission for partitioning the Punjab and Bengal. Jinnah with the consent of the League suggested Sir Cyril Radcliffe to chair the commissions which was reluctantly accepted by the Congress. Radcliffe reached New Delhi on July 8. The Viceroy gave him five weeks to draw new national boundaries. Soon separate committees went to work to partition the army and the territories, which remained for some ninety years under the British control.

164. Ibid.
Nehru had requested the Viceroy to remain on as the Governor-General of India, but Jinnah desired himself to be the Governor-General of Pakistan on August 15, 1947. Jinnah suspected that Mountbatten being a friend of Nehru would treat Pakistan as a stepchild.

Jinnah assured the minorities that in his Pakistan they would have "protection with regard to their religion, faith, life, property and culture. They would, in all respect, be citizens of Pakistan without any discrimination ... The same principle ... would apply to the minorities in India as well."

The Indian Independence Bill was passed by the House of Commons on July 16, at its third reading, and on July 18, the Indian Independence Act received the Royal assent. On July 19, Mountbatten announced the establishment of two separate provisional governments India and Pakistan. A communique was issued confirming taking-over of the portfolios of different ministries by the Congress and the League Wings in the Cabinet of the Interim Government of India and Pakistan respectively. A similar

procedure was adopted in the Punjab and Bengal legislative assemblies before partitioning of these States.

There were the following provinces in August, 1947, before partition of India: The strategic provinces were Bengal, Punjab, Sind, NWFP, Baluchistan and Sylhet. As decided by the members in the Legislative Assembly of Muslim and non-Muslim majority areas, East Bengal and West Bengal decided to join Pakistan and Hindustan respectively. Likewise, the members in the Legislative Assembly of Punjab of the Muslim majority areas and non-Muslim majority areas of West Punjab and East Punjab decided to join Pakistan and Hindustan respectively, the Muhammadan and Indian Christian constituencies in Sylhet in Assam in a referendum favoured to join East Bengal (Pakistan). Sind, Baluchistan, and NWFP decided to join Pakistan. The other seven provinces, Assam, Bihar, Bombay, Central Provinces, Madras, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh, being Hindu-majority provinces, decided to join India.

The problem of accession of Princely States to India or Pakistan became controversial. The Viceroy, on June 3, 1947, had announced:

"When the British withdrew from India, paramountcy would lapse and the rulers of the
Indian states would become technically and legally independent; they could enter into any relationship with the successor government or governments; or they could remain independent; and they were free to decide all this at their convenience."166

The Congress pleaded that as 'paramountcy' came into existence as a fact and not by an agreement, the Congress had the right to rule over the princely states after independence and the princes would have no right to declare independence or to decide to accede to India or Pakistan. Further, the Congress demanded that the people of every state should decide whether they wish to join India or Pakistan, while the Muslim League committed a grave mistake by claiming that the right to accede or secede to India or Pakistan should be given to the rulers, so that the Muslim states of Hyderabad, Bhopal and Rampur could join Pakistan, but it forgot that due to their geographical situation, it was impossible.

Meanwhile, the Radcliffe's final Award was kept secret till the eve of the partition and declaration of independence.

Jinnah with his sister left for Karachi in the Viceroy's Dakota in the morning of August 7. They were welcomed by tens of thousands of admirers with the slogan of "Pakistan Zindabad." The first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan met on August 11, and unanimously elected Jinnah to preside over its meetings. Two days after, Mountbatten reached Karachi and inaugurated the Dominion of Pakistan on August 14, 1947. Jinnah was sworn-in as Governor-General of Pakistan. The Viceroy flew back to New Delhi and inaugurated the Dominion of India on August 15, 1947. The Radcliffe Award was given to the leaders of India and Pakistan on August 16, 1947.