Chapter Eight

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS
The foreign policy of a country is not accidental nor is it the brainwave of the policy-makers. The general approach of the country is conditioned by its history and tradition and the core of its foreign policy is determined by the conception it has of its vital interest involved in a particular situation. In a country like the United States, foreign policy is particularly susceptible to internal pressures and pulls and the prevailing mood of the public at large. It would, therefore, seem appropriate to give some consideration to these factors in the US public life in so far as they are relevant to the subject-matter of this dissertation.

Legacy of the War of Independence

The War of Independence has undoubtedly been one of the key events in American history. Apart from profoundly affecting the future course of the new Republic of the United States of America, it determined the general approach of the American people towards all nations struggling for freedom from foreign yoke. It became natural for the Americans to sympathize with the national aspirations of subject peoples. (1) Moreover, the

See Robert Morss Lovett, "America and India", *Modern Review*, 36 (July 1924), pp. 14-15. Lovett, who was a Professor at the University of Chicago and was also on the editorial board of the New Republic, went to the extent of saying that in view of America's past the... contd. on next page
American Revolution threw up some symbols which predisposed an average American to interpret the events of the national independence movement in the world in terms of his own revolutionary history. The simple fact that the Indian national movement adopted "Congress" as the name of its political organ was, according to Max Beloff, the British historian, "a powerful factor in winning American support for its aims." (2) Others believed that it was nothing less than "a stroke of genius" on the part of Gandhi to seize upon the salt tax as the central point of his civil disobedience movement in 1930, for "the analogy between this solemn manufacture of illicit salt and the famous Boston Tea Party proved too tempting to be passed over by the American Press." (3) Whether Gandhi adopted this strategy consciously or unconsciously is not proven, but it is certainly true that some Americans were reminded of their Boston Tea Party when they looked at the Salt Satyagraha. (4)

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only freedom which the typical American thought worthy of consideration was complete freedom. He asserted that the surest way to kill American interest in the Indian struggle was to represent it as if it was a tempest in a tea-pot, a struggle for local autonomy only. He thought that when young India made it clear that what it wanted was not local autonomy but complete freedom, "then Americans will know how to recognize a sister nation and prepare to bid her welcome to a place among the free peoples of the earth."


4 Chapter IV, pp. 155, 158.
The American Revolution had also another effect to the discomfort of the Colonial Powers. It had brought about the first break in the European Colonial system. Thereafter it acted as an example before other peoples to seek freedom from colonial rule. That the Americans had gained their freedom through a War of Independence and that in this they had sought and received aid from a third country (France), filled the struggling peoples with the hope that the Americans not only would sympathize with their cause but also intervene on their behalf.

Establishment of the Tradition of Non-Intervention

But the Founding Fathers of the American Republic soon laid down some of the basic tenets of American foreign policy; one of them being the principle of "non-intervention". George Washington in his celebrated Farewell Address of 17 September 1796 told his fellow citizens that their "true policy" was "to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world...." (5) This was reinforced by Thomas Jefferson who in his Inaugural Address of 4 March 1801 asked the Americans to understand that one of the essential principles of his Administration was "peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none...." (6) John Quincy Adams broadened the meaning and scope of this policy of non-intervention in 1821. Speaking on the occasion of 4 July, the Secretary of State expressed himself against colonialism

6 Ibid., p. 40.
but, at the same time, clearly stated that whereas the United States would sympathize with all freedom struggles, it would intervene in none:

Wherever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will be America's heart, her benedictions, and her prayers. But she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own. She will recommend the general cause by the countenance of her voice, and by the benignant sympathy of her example. (7)

The Case of Hungary

This being so, it was not surprising that even Louis Kossuth, who was leading the revolt of the Hungarian people against the oppressive rule of Austria and who had been given hero's welcome both in the official and non-official circles of the United States in 1851-1852, was disappointed. Daniel Webster, the Secretary of State, waxed eloquent over his "aspirations" to see "Hungarian independence, Hungarian self-government, Hungarian control of Hungarian destinies" in the dinner given to Kossuth by President Fillmore. But the Secretary, writing to a friend, made it clear as to what was going to be his real policy in the matter. "I shall treat him [Kossuth] with all personal and individual respect, but if he should speak to me of the policy of 'intervention,' I shall 'have ears more deaf than adders,'"

he explained. (8) As a result, Kossuth's mission was a failure: the American Government stuck to its policy of non-intervention and the American people contributed hardly anything effective to enable him to carry on the war. (9)

**The Case of Ireland**

It is true that more recently, i.e., on the question of independence of Ireland, the US Government could be said to have "intervened" in a way. President Wilson got it conveyed to the British Prime Minister that the Irish question should be settled in view of the fact that "the only circumstance which seems now to stand in the way of an absolutely cordial cooperation with Great Britain by practically all Americans who are not influenced by ties of blood directly associating them with Germany is the failure so far to find a satisfactory method of self-government for Ireland." (10) But the point to be underlined here, again, is that the compulsive force behind President Wilson's "intervention" was not so much any principle of the American foreign policy as the existence of a strong public opinion in America on behalf of Ireland's independence. The Irish-Americans, who constituted a sizeable political group in the country and a majority of whom gave allegiance to the Democratic Party, had succeeded in securing

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the sympathy of a large section of the general public towards the cause of Ireland. This was reflected in the Chambers of the US Congress also. President Wilson could have neglected this public pressure only at his peril.

Nevertheless, when the time came for applying the principle which was advocated by President Wilson himself — the principle of self-determination — the President failed to live up to the expectations. At the Paris Peace Conference, the President did not take the position that the application of the principle of self-determination to Ireland was a necessary condition of peace. As Nicholas Mansergh has pointed out: "The President in fact preferred to regard the solution of the Irish Question more as a factor in home politics, than as an integral part of the new European settlement." (11) A delegation of three Americans headed by Frank P. Walsh, former co-chairman of the US War Labor Board, sailed from the United States to France to present the case of Ireland before the Peace Conference. President Wilson was in a sorry pickle: he did not want to offend the British opinion by giving the impression that he was interfering in their domestic affairs. Neither could he afford to incur the displeasure of the liberals at home and give a stick to the Republican opponents to beat him with. President Wilson later confessed: "My first impulse was to tell the Irish to go to hell, but feeling that this would not be the act of a statesman, I denied myself this personal satisfaction." (12) Following the middle course, he personally

received the delegates but explained to them why the Peace
Conference could not grant them a hearing. The net result was
that the Irish demand was not considered at the Peace Conference
despite the presence of President Wilson, the propounder of the
principle of right of self-determination which was one of his
"war cries".

The Isolationist Mood of the Post-War Years

The foregoing has shown that despite America's revolutionary
past and its natural inclination to sympathize with the struggles
of the colonial peoples, there has been a strong streak of non-
intervention too in its tradition. In the years following the
First World War, this streak was reinforced and the general mood
of the country was that of "Isolationism" from the affairs of
the old world. (13) It is true that this mood did not inhibit the
United States from expanding its commercial, financial, and indus-
trial activities in foreign countries. (14) In the field of
international politics also, the United States departed from the
hidebound tenets of isolationism now and then. (15) Yet such was
the pervasiveness of the attitude of withdrawal that every
President and Secretary of State in the interwar period had to
abide by it. (16) The Great Depression only served to intensify

13 For a detailed study of this mood and its causes, see
Selig Adler, The Isolationist Impulse: Its Twentieth
Century Reaction (New York, 1957).

14 See Harold Underwood Faulkner, American Economic History
(New York, 1959), edn 8, pp. 685-6. See also Odgen L.
Mills, "Our Foreign Policy: A Republican View", Foreign

15 See Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American
People (New York, 1964), edn 7, pp. 629-31. See also
Mills, n. 14, pp. 558-60.

16 See Adler, n. 13, p. 146.
this mood since it brought about an avalanche of domestic issues which demanded immediate attention. "The Great Depression", as Samuel Flagg Bemis has commented, "called for a 'New Deal' at home, not abroad." (17) The result was that the first term of President Franklin D. Roosevelt witnessed a profounder isolationism than before. (18)

**Attitude towards the Philippine Independence**

The conservatism and isolationism of the post-war years found expression in the policy of the United States towards the independence of the Philippines. The policy-makers of the Republican regime -- from Harding to Hoover -- rejected the demand of the Philippine independence on the basis of arguments that the Filipinos did not really want independence; that they were not ready for it; that a long period of training in democratic way of life was a prerequisite for any eventual independence; that the Filipinos needed American military protection from their aggressive neighbours; and that grant of independence would disturb the stability of the Far East. (19) These arguments are

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18 For a study of the reflection of this mood in foreign policy, see Charles A. Beard, *American Foreign Policy in the Making 1932-1940: A Study in Responsibilities* (New Haven, 1945).

almost reminiscent of the British arguments with regard to the independence of India.

The Republicans, however, lost control of the Congress in the election held in 1930. Since then concerted efforts were made in the Congress to pass a law which would give substantial independence to the Philippines. The outcome was the Hawes-Cutting Act which was passed by the Congress in January 1933 over the veto of President Hoover. The Philippine Legislature, however, declined to accept this Act, one of the grounds being that the military, naval, and other reservations made in the Act were inconsistent with true independence. This led the Congress to pass a modified but substantially the same bill, called the Tydings-McDuffie Bill, which was signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on 24 March 1934 and accepted by the Philippine Legislature on 1 May 1934. Thus was paved the way for the Philippine independence. (20)

The passage of Tydings-McDuffie Act has been cited both in the USA and elsewhere as an example of generosity on the part of the United States towards its colony. The history of the pulls and pressures behind the various measures finally leading to the passage of this Act, however, gives a somewhat different picture. Of course, some Congressmen and public figures were inspired by anti-imperialism. But as Julius W. Pratt has pointed out, the Independence Act of 1934 "found probably 90 per cent of its

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According to the Act, the Philippines was to get independence at the end of a ten-year probationary period during which it would enjoy a "Commonwealth" status with a wide measure of autonomy under the general supervision and control of the United States. The "Commonwealth" was inaugurated in 1936, making 1946 the year of complete independence.
motivation in a cynical desire of American producers to close the American market to the Filipinos at whatever cost to the latter." (21) In the wake of hardships created by the Great Depression, many elements interested in the production of sugar, tobacco, cotton, etc., wanted to shut out the Philippine products of these varieties from the American market. The American Federation of Labor was also interested in excluding the Filipinos from competing with American Labour. Another source of the strength of the Philippine independence movement was the prevailing isolationist sentiment which found expression in the argument that if the United States got rid of the Philippines, the danger of its involvement in a Pacific war would be reduced. (22) Thus the passage of the Philippine Independence Act of 1934 was not an unalloyed victory of progressivism but in many respects of the conservatism and isolationism of the post-war America.

Cordiality of the Anglo-American Relations

One more relevant factor which ought to be taken into consideration in the present context is the state of relationship of the United States with Great Britain in the inter-war period. There have always been in the United States some elements who have taken pleasure in twisting the tail of the Old Lioness (Great Britain). These were active in the interwar period too. Apart from


the irritations caused by these, there were some issues which also worked against complete cordiality between the two countries, viz., the Irish Question (before its settlement in 1921), the economic competition for world market, the control of the seas, and the settlement of war debts. Yet, on the whole, relations between the two countries were good, and hostility, according to many scholars, remained "unthinkable". (23) Alanson Bigelow Houghton, US Ambassador in London in 1927, after "diligent search", found only one important issue dividing the two peoples — British and American — at that time: the status of the American potato in the British markets! He also expressed his belief that the future of the world depended largely upon the existence of a sound and cordial understanding between these two peoples. Fundamentally, declared the Ambassador, the basis of such an understanding already existed because: "We certainly think in much the same terms. We have much the same scale of values. We want the same kind of world. Consciously or unconsciously, we are seeking the same kind of future." (24)

**Changed Image of the British Empire**

It should also be remembered that by twentieth century the American colonial experience under the British Empire had become a matter of by-gone days. By the turn of the nineteenth century, a turn in the Anglo-American relations had also taken place. Great Britain approved of the American imperialist adventure in

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24 Quoted in Allen, n. 23, pp. 731, 732.
the wake of Spanish-American War (25) and about two decades later, America enthusiastically fought on the side of Great Britain in a World War. There were still, to be sure, many Americans who could be characterized as Anglophobes, but, on the whole, the situation was much different than before. Important sections of Americans had come to hold an image of the British Empire which did not tally with the image the Indians held. The New York Times was all praise for the care the British Empire had bestowed upon the "sunburned peoples". (26) The Review of Reviews was sure that the American colonies would not have fought the British Empire at all if the MacDonal ds and the Baldwins of today had governed the colonies during those fateful days of the seventeen seventies. (27) Moreover, Republican leaders like Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft were not the only notable figures to hold high opinion of the performance of the British Empire. (28) Cordell Hull, a Democrat and Secretary of State of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 25 See William Archibald Dunning, The British Empire and the United States: A Review of Their Relations During the Cent ury of Peace Following the Treaty of Ghent (New York, 1916), pp. 321-3. See also R. G. Neale, Britain and American Imperialism 1898-1900 (Brisbane, 1955), p. 124. According to this author, whose study is based upon diplomatic papers, Britain followed two principles on this occasion: "The first was merely to let the United States know that no objection would be made if the Philippines were to become American but that if this were not possible then England insisted upon first option to purchase them.... The second principle was to stand clear and permit the expansionist mood of the United States executive to take its own course uncomplicated by any charge that Britain was manoeuvring its neighbour into international politics to secure British rather than American interests."

27 See Chapter VI, pp. 302-3.
28 See Chapter I, pp. 14-16.
also believed in the great service the British Empire was doing to humanity. During conversation with the Canadian Minister on the question of Empire Preferences on 18 February 1937, he was explicit on this matter. Recording his conversation he says:

I repeated to him [the Canadian Minister] that I had often said that neither I nor my country would in any circumstances see anything said or done which would weaken a single link in the British Empire; that it was the greatest stabilizer of human affairs in the world today; that it meant everything to the future of human progress and civilization for the British Empire to continue to function for the service of the human race, as well as itself. (29)

ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE QUESTION OF INDIA

Factors: Positive and Negative

Except the legacy of the War of Independence, all the factors dealt with in the foregoing paragraphs — the tradition of non-intervention; the isolationist mood of the nineteen-twenties and first half of the nineteen thirties; the conservative motive behind the legislation to give independence to the Philippines; the cordiality of Anglo-American relations in the interwar period; and the faith of a considerable number of Americans, including important public figures, in the positive function of the British Empire — would appear to be strong negative factors so far as the creation and sustenance of American interest in India is concerned.

An additional negative factor was the absence from the American soil of immigrants from India in such large numbers that they could act as a pressure group in the body politic of the

United States in the same way the Irish-American group acted. This partly explains why the Houses of the US Congress never passed a resolution expressing sympathy with the cause of India although in the case of Ireland they had done so. (30)

In fact, until the Irish Question was settled by Great Britain in 1921, the pro-India movement in the United States received support from the Irish groups, thereby becoming relatively more forceful and vocal. After the settlement, however, much of the pro-Irish activity subsided and, in consequence, the pro-India movement also lost some of its force. The British authorities knew this situation and took a sigh of relief on this score. Ambassador Geddes reported to the Foreign Secretary at home in a confident tone: "While this Irish agitation was raging, the Friends of Freedom for India was carried by the tide but now that it has diminished there is no reason to believe that Indian agitation will generate sufficient force to drive the United States to political action." (31)

Despite these negative factors, Americans, subject to periodical shifts, evinced considerable interest in Indian developments in the interwar period. According to S. K. Ratcliffe, the English journalists knew that when they wrote on Indian subjects, they would find a more ready and lucrative market in

30 Such a resolution was passed by the House of Representative on 4 March 1919 and by the Senate on 6 June 1919.

31 British Ambassador in Washington (Sir A. C. Geddes) to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Lord Curzon), 10 February 1922, F. O. 115/2749 of 1922, Public Record Office, London. Friends of Freedom for India was an organization of the Indians resident in the United States and their American supporters.
the American press and magazines than they could in England. His assessment was that since 1921 the American papers had given a much larger amount of Indian news than the British papers. (32)

Of the more important factors responsible for this, three could be enumerated as: (1) increased activities of the American missionaries in India after the First World War (33), (2) greater interest of the United States in the trade possibilities in India in the same period (34), and (3) coming of Gandhi on the political scene of India.

American Interest in Gandhi and Its Weakness

In the period under study (1930-1935), the American interest in India was at its highest point during the salt satyagraha led by Gandhi in 1930. Gandhi's march to Dandi and the violation of salt laws at the sea-shore there reminded the Americans of the Boston Tea Party, and the subsequent civil disobedience movement conjured


34 See "American Exporters are Discovering India", ed., Commerce Reports (Washington), No. 17 (27 April 1925), pp. 195-6. This journal was published by the Department of Commerce of the US Government. See also C. K. Moser, The United States in India's Trade (Washington, Department of Commerce, 1939); and "America Supplies Increasing Share of India's Import Requirements", American Trust Review of the Pacific (San Francisco), 18 (16 March 1929), pp. 64-67.
up before them the scenes of the War of Independence. To some of them, Gandhi appeared to be the George Washington of India.

Gandhi interested the Americans not only because his was a quaint figure, a good subject for cartoonists. (35) To the liberals, the pacifists, and a section of clergymen and religious thinkers, his attempt to bring about a social and political change in India through the methods of non-violence represented a redeeming feature of the strife-torn world of the post-war period. Some highly respected American clergymen even described Gandhi the Christ of the modern era.

Yet that was only one aspect of the American image of Gandhi. There were many Americans who, on the other hand, believed that Gandhi was a scheming politician, prototype of a horse-trader; at best, an Oriental enigma. Clearly, Gandhi's image was "hedged in paradoxes." (36) He was "an incredible combination of Jesus Christ, Tammany Hall, and your father...." (37)

But this, again, does not exhaust all the dimensions of American reaction to Gandhi. A large number of Americans were surprised that this "wisp of a man" could mobilize millions behind himself and shake the mightiest Empire of the world. Of course, some of them chuckled at the fact that this mightiest Empire happened to be the same power against which they had to take up cudgels in 1776. But what a difference! Many of the Americans

35 Many of them were reproduced in the Literary Digest. See for example, Literary Digest, 105 (3 May 1930), p. 13; 110 (26 September 1931), p. 6.


noted — thanks to the reports sent by American journalists from India — that while their forefathers had rattled weapons against weapons in their freedom struggle, Gandhi's "soldiers" bared their bosoms before the British bayonets. The man who could inspire such heroism could not be written off. Gandhi was the *Time* Magazine's "MAN OF THE YEAR", and his portrait adorned its first issue in 1931. (38)

America's preoccupation with Gandhi exposes one weakness of American interest in India. It is true that, in comparison to the situation in 1921-1922, there was a greater attempt in the 'thirties to understand the dynamics of Indian nationalism. In 1933-1934, some attention was paid to the rise of "leftism" under Jawaharlal Nehru too. But to the average American, Gandhi was India. Consequently, the vicissitudes of Gandhi's political role in India also marked the ebb and flow, as the case may be, of the average America's interest in India. Gandhi's march to Dandi, his parleys with Lord Irwin, his presence at the London Round Table Conference, his "fast unto death" — all were matters of considerable interest to the Americans. Now and then the liberals drew the attention of the Americans to the world importance of Gandhi's methods and to the necessity of the solution of the Indian problem for world peace. Well-meaning persons like Rev. J. T. Sunderland argued that the evil spirit of imperialism which had afflicted the recent history of America had its source in

38  *Time*, 17 (5 January 1931), pp. 14-15. The frontispiece of this issue carries a full-page portrait of Gandhi in a thinking mood with an inscription at the bottom:

**MAN OF THE YEAR**

In jail, he; at large, Wiggin, Jones, Lewis, Stalin, Hitler, Capone.
the "nobob" spirit of England, which in turn, got it from its domination of India. So India was America's concern. (39) Occasionally there were comments on the importance of India for American trade too. But one looks in vain for any serious and sustained discussion of the importance of Indian independence to America in the context of world politics. In fact, early in the second half of the nineteen-thirties, the chief consular officer of the United States in India himself was a victim of this lack of interest in political developments in India. To him, the political events in India were of "very secondary importance from our point of view" so long as there was no interference with the work of the American missionaries and commercial interests in the field.

The Spectrum of American Public Opinion

The public opinion of America with regard to political developments in India could be represented by a spectrum. At one end was the opinion of the liberals, the pacifists, a group of clergymen, and the leftists of different hues. They supported the cause of the Indian nationalists, majority of them being greatly impressed by Gandhi and what he stood for. Some of them were not fully convinced that granting of complete independence to India was politically possible. (40) But this, in their view, really did not matter much. Primarily, it was a question of

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principle: self-government was the inalienable right of every people and the Indians could not be denied this right if they demanded it and were willing to pay the price of freedom which many peoples had paid in history. Since there was sufficient evidence to show that the Indians desired self-government, this group of Americans did not see why the desire of the Indians should not be conceded and why Americans, who claimed to stand by the cause of liberty, should not sympathize with the Indians in this matter. (41)

Beyond this, there was a wide section of opinion which broadly sympathized with the aspirations of the Indian nationalists but looked at the problem not from the point of view of principle but feasibility. To such Americans, it was not simply a question of India's "having a right" to be free. They pointed to the chronic chaos in "free" China and the price that unfortunate country had paid — so it appeared to them — in terms of human lives and happiness. They wondered "if India cannot in time win self-rule without running up a gruesome expense account." (42)

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41 See Chapter II, pp. 75, 77; Chapter IV, pp. 176-7. See also Oswald Garrison Villard, "India and America", New Orient, 2 (April-June 1925), p. 26. Villard says: "I think the world needs nothing so much today as to see the Indian people set themselves to the task of self-government, however, great and terrible the odds with which they must contend. They are indeed bound by chains of ignorance and caste religion... and yet since my service to democracy is not lip service — since I am one of those who have complete faith in the right of self-determination and self-government of all peoples -- I can think of nothing that would be more stimulating than to see this experiment tried and to see the Indian people assume the right to say how they shall govern themselves. Either we believe in democracy or we do not; either we believe in self-government and its educative value or we do not."

They approved of MacDonald's method of advancing the cause of India through conferences and mutual consultations, i.e., through evolution rather than any forceful method. They did not see eye to eye with Gandhi on the question of civil disobedience movement but, nevertheless, recognized him as a force and believed that the British would do well to reckon with him. As a corollary, they approved of the conciliatory policy as of Lord Irwin and disapproved of the "strong hand" policy advocated by the British "die-hard" conservatives.

At the extreme end of the spectrum was the section which while professing support to the eventual "grant" of self-government to India, echoed British arguments with regard to alleged divisive forces in India and the utter social and political backwardness of the Indians. It ridiculed Gandhi, disputed that he represented India, and, at times, even became critical of the British authorities for showing leniency to him and his followers. (43)

**Unfounded Criticism by Englishmen**

Many Englishmen believed that America, on the whole, was pro-Gandhi and anti-British. (44) They complained that large numbers of Americans saw the developments in India through the

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43 See Chapter IV, p. 159; Chapter V, pp. 253, 259, 270-1; Chapter VI, pp. 301, 303.

44 See the speech of Professor Theodore E. Gregory of Manchester University at the Institute of Politics, Williams­town, Massachusetts, on 12 August 1931. New York Times, 13 August 1931, p. 9. See also S. K. Ratcliffe, n. 32, pp. 79-80. According to Schmidt also, "American public opinion ever since this time 1900 was decidedly pro-nationalist and anti-British". Schmidt, n. 33, p. 297.
spectacles of the Indian nationalists. (45) This criticism, however, was unfounded. As the New York Times pointed out: "What was more natural than that large numbers of American readers should have followed the progress of events in India with sympathy for the Nationalist cause?" (46) Yet the fact of the matter was that "most Americans," the paper continued, "have seen the movement in India through what Gandist extremists might describe as British spectacles." The paper told the British critics that according to these Americans, India's own self-interests demanded "a gradual working out of her national aspirations", the implication being that they did not believe in the "impossibilist" position of Gandhi to get independence immediately. What was more significant was that these were the Americans who were "unquestionably more important" than those who looked at the Indian developments through "Gandhi spectacles". (47) In the matter of creating public opinion, the former mattered more than the latter. Even some knowledgeable Englishmen knew

45 See New York Times, 10 March 1931, p. 11; also The Times, 10 March 1931, p. 14. On this occasion, the correspondent of The Times complained that the Department of Public Information of the Government of India failed to give authentic information about the proceedings of the Gandhi-Irwin talks and the foreign correspondents, including Americans, flocked to Gandhi's camp to get the story.


47 Ibid.
this position and derived satisfaction out of it. (48)

It may be noted here that some of the American consular officers stationed in India also looked at the Indian developments through the "British spectacles". Consul General Frazer recorded in 1929 that Wilbur Kebling, Consul in Bombay, and Elliot Richardson, Consul in Karachi, who otherwise were capable officers, were "pro-British" rather than "neutral" in their reportings. (49) Again in 1932, A. C. Frost, another Consul General, remarked that Joseph Groeninger, Consul in Karachi, had "perhaps too much tendency to accept the official British view without sufficient qualification...." (50) It should be remembered in this connection that Bombay and Karachi were politically important consular

48 See letter to the editor by (James) Ian Macpherson, member of the House of Commons, The Times, 26 July 1930, p. 13. This letter was related to the series of articles by Edward Thompson published in The Times on 21, 22, and 23 July 1930. See Chapter IV, pp. 201-4. Macpherson congratulated Thompson for exposing the misconceptions current among certain sections of American opinion in India. But he was sure that Thompson did not deal with the views of "those substantial sections of the nation [America] — the bankers, the corporate lawyers, the heads of great business houses — by which American official policy is in the last resort really moulded." Even Rushbrook Williams, who on his return from the USA in the summer of 1930, complained that the anti-British elements in American opinion were both more vocal and more active at that time than the pro-British elements, conceded that the "men of affairs, the businessmen and the professional classes" tended on the whole to sympathise with Britain's difficulties and to deprecate the active sympathy shown by "radical intellectuals towards subversive opinion in India." See Rushbrook Williams, n. 3, p. 487.

49 Consul General (Frazer) to Secretary of State, 3 April 1929, 845.00/641, Records of the Department of State.

50 Consul General (Frost) to Secretary of State, 6 December 1932, 845.00/802, Records of the Department of State.
districts in India, Bombay being the focus of the nationalist movement in general and Karachi (which included the Punjab) of the communal tangle in particular.

**Attitude of the US Government**

The official attitude of the United States could be described as reserved and cautious. On some occasions the US officials expressed the view that England was showing the same disposition as that of the imperialists of the eighteenth century; that England was using the Princes as a counterweight against the nationalists; and that England was happy at the failure of the London Round Table Conference. (51) During the turbulent period of the salt satyagraha, the American Consul General in India went to the extent of saying that the Indians were right in holding that they would not get more from Great Britain than they insisted on having and agitated for getting. In a way, he justified the Indian agitation. (52) But, on the whole, the officials believed that the Indians were too divided amongst themselves to make it possible for Great Britain to grant them self-government. (53) Moreover, they were cautious in not doing anything which might give the impression that they either sided with the nationalists or encouraged them. (54) The

51 See Chapter I, p. 51; Chapter VII, p. 346; Chapter V, pp. 238-9, 240.

52 See Chapter III, p. 104.


54 See Chapter I, pp. 30, 40-41, Chapter VI, p. 289.
Department of State also refused to mediate between England and India when once a suggestion was given to this effect. (55)

This, however, does not negate the fact that the Department of State was keenly interested in Indian developments. At important junctures, the Department wanted telegraphic reports from India and, when there was a gap in the reporting, it pulled up its consular officers. (56) The earnestness of the officials of the Department was clearly expressed by Wallace Murray, Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs under whose charge the subject of India had been placed in 1937, when he wrote to J. C. White, Consul General in Calcutta, on 18 December:


56 See Chapter I, pp. 28; Chapter III, p. 117. After 29 May 1930 there was a prolonged gap in reporting from the US Consulate General in Calcutta. Other consular officers under the Calcutta Consulate General also had defaulled in the second half of 1930. The Department of State pulling up the Consul in-charge in Calcutta wrote: 
"... you are informed that the records of the Department reveal delinquency in periodic reporting by every office under your supervision.... You are requested to give careful consideration to the desires of the Department ... and make every effort to supply regularly information on political developments.... The Department has fortunately been adequately informed of conference/Round Table Conference/ matters by the Embassy at London, but it has been found that press despatches in 1930 on events within India have not served to inform it as well as first-hand official despatches would have done. The officers in India should, therefore, be admonished to report regularly on local discussions of and demonstrations for and against the new form of government which may be offered in India. In fact, it is considered that constitutional developments in India will for a long period afford excellent opportunities for interesting and useful reports." W. R. Castle, Jr., (for Secretary of State) to Robert Y. Jarvis, Consul in-charge in Calcutta, 10 February 1931, 800.00/209A, Records of the Department of State.
You see, we are really most interested in this Indian question and the manifest complexity of the situation merely serves to whet our interest the more. (57)

A little earlier, this Division of the Department of State had wanted such reports from its consular officers in India that it could be made to "realize that India's teeming millions are seeking to work out their own destiny..." It was eager to know what conception the Indians had of this destiny and how they proposed to tackle it.

To sum up: although a section of American opinion vocally and persistently supported the nationalist case in India, it was never so widespread and powerful as to compel the US Government to adopt a positive attitude in the matter. Neither was the US Government internally propelled to adopt such an attitude since no vital interest of the United States, as perceived by its policy-makers, was significantly involved in the Indian developments. (58) The US Government chose, on the other hand, not to go abroad "in search of monsters to destroy." It sat on the fence and watched the clouds and the sunshine on the Indian horizon with keenness.

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57 Wallace Murray to J. C. White, 18 December 1937, 845.00/956, Records of the Department of State.

58 See J. D. Whelpley, British-American Relations (Boston, 1924), p. 141. The book carries an "Introduction" by George Harvey, US Ambassador in London in 1923. The author says: "There is nothing in the American interest in India which can have the least effect upon British-American relations, unless possibly in the future international jealousies over the control of oil-producing territory, which may lead to friction between the two Governments. This is unlikely, however, and as there are no political interests which conflict, and never will be, India can be looked upon as a part of the British Empire over the administration of which no serious controversy can ever arise between Great Britain and the United States."