CHAPTER FOUR
GENESIS OF CRIPPS MISSION

1 GENERAL SITUATION

Japan destroyed the U.S.A. fleet at Pearl Harbour in the Pacific by a sudden attack on 7 December, 1941. Now the Japanese threat to India became a serious problem. Distinguished group of Indian liberals, under the leadership of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, sent a cable to the Prime Minister Mr. Churchill, at Washington, as he was in Washington from 22nd December 1941 to 14th January 1942 - appealing in the face of so grave an international situation for some bold stroke of far-sighted statesmanship in order to enlist India's whole-hearted active co-operation in the war effort. Also they suggested concrete measures to fulfill people's aspirations and to make the people realize that they were safe-guarding their own freedom. Sapru and his co-signatories wrote in a cable:

"These are war measures whose adoption need no way prejudice claims or demands different parties regard to India's permanent constitution. But knowing intimately feelings aspirations our countrymen as we do, we must express our conviction that nothing less than inauguration this policy can resolve crisis in India. Urgency immediate action cannot be overemphasised".1

Thus these who were known as liberal politicians in

India also realized the gravity of the situation and demanded some bold stroke of statesmanship from Britain to fulfill India's aspirations, when war shadows were approaching the Indian border.

Also, All India Newspaper Editor's Conference met in Calcutta on 18 December, 1941. Mr. Srinivasan, President of its Standing Committee, asserted that: "Britain should be prepared to install immediately in seats of power and authority, both at the Centre and in the Provinces, the natural leaders of the people".¹ In other words in India the opinion of the press also was in favour of urgent transfer of power and authority in the hands of natural leaders of the people at both the levels i.e. at the Centre and in the Provinces.

British press opinion also was urging for fresh negotiations regarding India's political deadlock. Gandhiji had asked the Congress President to relieve him from Congress leadership because of his well-known non-violent non-co-operation views regarding the war. This request was granted as the Congress working Committee could not fully share his views. This event had attracted the attention of some of the British Newspapers. The Manchester Guardian in its editorial on January 1, 1942, commented:

¹. The Statesman, December 19, 1941.
... Mr. Gandhi has asked the working Committee of the Congress to release him from his leadership and the Committee has agreed. Therefore, the Congress has any idea of considering fresh negotiations with the Government it is freed from what was a false position.¹

The same day The London Times asked the government to meet half-way all the claims of India. The paper remarked in its editor: "... the complication which has always been present while Mr. Gandhi led the Congress has been removed. On the British side, there should be certainly every readiness to meet half-way all claims which take full account both of the stern realities of the Indian Military situation, and of the British undertakings to open a full share of responsibility to India's political leaders..."²

On January 2 The New Statesman and Nation wrote from London: "... the impact of the war on the Congress and the retirement of Mr. Gandhi are events of the greatest interest and significance. We hope that Mr. Churchill and Mr. Amery will not once again let the opportunity slip by being content to plead..."

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1. Manchester Guardian, Jan. 1, 1942
2. London Times, January 1, 1942
the still unresolved conflict between the Hindus and the Muslims

The Spectator argued that: "the acceptance of his
(Gandhiji's) resignation by the Congress Working Committee
showed that the Congress had not closed the door of active
coopération in the effort". 2

From the above mentioned quotations one can clearly see that
even in England, the Press was of the opinion that something
must be done by the Government to solve the political deadlock.
In other words English press was of the opinion that Congress
was ready to co-operate in solving the political deadlock even
at the price of Gandhiji's opposition and the government must
recognise stern realities of the war situation and must start
fresh negotiations to solve the political deadlock.

Also speeches in the House of Lords by Catto and Farringdon
were pro-Indian and embarrassing for the government. Lord
Farringdon criticized the British Government for its complacency
He suggested that to end the present deadlock:

"...His Majesty's Government should state unequivocally
that it is their intention to give India self-government
and that not at any future date; that they recognize
her right to have it now and will take necessary steps
to implement that right. To that end, I would suggest
that His Majesty's Government should send out to India
some persons—and I would say definitely a person rather
than a commission—who can negotiate with the Indian
leaders". 3

1. The New Statesman and Nation, January 2, 1942
2. The Spectator, January 2, 1942.
covers Ca. 582-638 Vol. 12).
It is clear that the Labour Party members were embarking the Government to do something creative regarding India. Even Catto's speech had been reprinted in full in Statement from which other papers had copied extracts. Indian members of the Viceroy's executive council were embarrassed by this speech, since they could hardly afford to appear to be less pro-Indian than Catto. In India, there was a fairly general demand that Prime Minister Churchill should make a statement to remove what were said to be the doubts about The British intentions.

2. ANTI-BRITISH FEELING IN INDIA

Among Indians, mostly among the educated Indians there was a discontent towards The British power and policies. This discontent was growing more and more. The outbreak of intense political agitation which had been taking place every few years were the periodic welling up of these deeper springs of discontent. Until the end of the First World War there was fairly general agreement that the British connection had been beneficial to India, but during the period of Second World War, the belief had been inculcated that it had been always

1. Catto, 1st Baron (Thomas Sivewright Catto), former business man with Indian interests; Financial Adviser (unpaid) to Chancellor of Exchequer since 1940. Farringdon, 2nd Baron (Alexander Gavin Henderson).
and in almost every way harmful. Younger generation was convinced that whatever political progress had been made had been the fruit of India's struggle with a hostile British Government. They believed that all difficulties, including their communal dissensions, had been brought into being by a Machiavellian ruling power.

Refering to this existence of a great store of violent emotion of Indians against the British Government, the Rev. J. Mckenzie had written to the Viceroy: "At almost any gathering of students a speaker has only to quote from the latest speech of Mr. Amery or any other British statesman regarding India to evoke roars of laughter".¹

This spirit had spread even to the temperate and the loyal circles. The Indian people whose loyalty was regarded by the British will never part with any power in Indis until they are compelled to do so. Most moderate Hindu had an uneasy feeling that they were being disloyal to their own people if in any controversy they happen to take the British side.

¹ Mansergh and Lumby: Document Number: 126; Mr. Amery to Mr. Churchill 15, February, 1942; p.173.
Suggesting to the Viceroy that the Prime Minister should make a clear and definite statement setting forth the policy of His Majesty's Government in regard to political future of India, Rev. J. Mckenzie wrote: "Indian people generally believe that he is not in sympathy with Indian aspirations or with what is understood to be the declared policy of Government in regard to India. Secondly, whatever he says will be listened to in India and throughout the world. Incidentally, a statement from him would have a most salutary effect in America, where our cause has suffered more than most people realise from misrepresentation of our Indian policy. "Further he cautioned: "...unless some action on these lines is taken, it seems that we shall have to face increasing distrust, bitterness and hatred".¹

It is clear on record that as the war situation became desperate almost all Indian political parties and groups became desperate for an immediate recognition of India's freedom and British withdrawal.

¹ Ibid; p.174. This letter was written by the Rev. J. Mckenzie, Professor of Philosophy at, and Principal of Wilson College, Bombay on 29th December 1941, to the Lord Linlithgow. Mr. Amery's Private Secretary had received a copy of this letter among the enclosures to a letter of 8 January from Lord Linlithgow's Private Secretary, Amery enclosed this letter as an Encloser, with his letter to Mr. Churchill on 15th Feb. 1942.
The resolution demanding national government was passed by the Third Session of the Non-party Leaders' Conference, which was met in New Delhi on February 21st and 22nd 1942. Its chief point was, that during the period of the war the Governor-General's Executive Council should be reconstructed as a truly National Government functioning on the basis of joint and collective responsibility and consisting entirely of non-officials enjoying public confidence and in charge of all portfolios subject to responsibility to the Crown, and in regard to defence without prejudice to the position of the Commander-in-chief as the executive head of the defence forces.  

Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha on March 1 demanded the abolition of the India office and the India Council, the complete nationalisation of the Government of India on democratic lines, the concentration of political sovereign in India and the transfer of the entire administration of India to Indian hands, including Defence, Finance, Foreign Affairs and relations with the Indian States.

3. MUSLIM REACTIONS

The Muslim League had pledged support to British War effort it was constantly demanding price for its help. Feeling annoyed at the non-fulfilment of all its demands "the Muslim League had ruled that its members should not associate themselves with the Government's War Effort". In the course of his presidential

2. Ibid., p.337.
address at the Madras session of All-India Muslim League in April, 1941, Jinnah had observed, "If the Government want the whole heart co-operation of the Muslim India, they must play their cards on the table".1

But the Muslim League only was not a representative spokesman of the Indian Muslims.

On 1st March, representing nine constituent Muslim organizations and speaking for the bulk of the Muslims, the All India Azad Muslim Board, in its session at Delhi passed a resolution. It stated:

...it feels constrained to conclude that the specious plea of the Secretary of State for India of the Indian Muslims, and that its attitude and demands constitute an insuperable obstacle in the way of India's freedom is an indefensible subterfuge to mask the disinclination of the British Government to part with power. This serious gravity of the situation occasioned by the menace of an early invasion most imperatively demands that the British Government should immediately recognise India's freedom and transfer real power to enable the representatives of the people to assume complete responsibility for the defence of the country as a whole in full and mutual collaboration with the other free countries".2

Azad Muslim League Board also demanded immediately India's freedom during the critical war and the right to defend her independently. Two days later, Mr. Churchill,

1. Presidential Address, All India Muslim League Madras Session April, 1941, p. 4-5.
Mr. L.S. Amery and Sir Stafford Cripps received a cablegram from Mr. Shaikh M. Zahirundin, President and Mr. Abdul Quiyum Vice-President, of the All India Momin Conference asserting:

...The All-India conference representing over 45,000,000 Muslims of the Momin (Ansar) community repudiates Mr. Jinnah's leadership as also the Moslem League's claim to possess the sole right to speak on behalf of Indian Moslems and supports the demand for immediate recognition of India's freedom".

4. THE CONGRESS POINT OF VIEW

Already the largest political party of India, the Indian National Congress had demanded, earlier, India's freedom and British withdrawal.

The Congress was opposed to the Fascist regime in Germany and "It had expressed in unmistakable terms its sympathy with all those countries which were from time to time, made the victims of unprovoked aggression". But for this reason the Congress was not prepared to be tied to British Imperialism in furtherance of its designs and policies. The Congress sympathy was with the victims of Fascist ideology. "But sympathy did not necessarily mean India's entanglement in War and that too without her consent".

1. Ibid., p.52.
3. Ibid., p.27.
The Congress had repeatedly disapproved of Fascism and Nazism. But it had made it absolutely plain that:

'the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people, and no outside authority can impose this decision upon them, nor can the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for imperialist ends'.¹ The resolution had demanded clarification of British War aims and stated very clearly "If the issue of the war is to defend the Status quo, imperialist possessions, colonial vested interests and privilege, then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a World order based on democracy then India is intensely interested in it".²

But the difference between the Government attitude and that of the Congress was too great to be squared and it could not be resolved. The positive and continued opposition of Britain by the strongest political party commanding the largest following in the country naturally upset the British Government rendered Indian War-efforts less effective. The Congress was decidedly arranged against the British Government which in violation of its own professions of fighting for the defence of democracy and self-determination was keeping India in subjection.

In fact the Congress had made a number of attempts to arrive

¹. Ibid; Working Committee's Resolution on War Crisis and India-Appendix, p.1-xi.
². Ibid; Working Committee's Resolution on War Crisis and India-Appendix, Pages, I-IX.
at a settlement with the British Government. The first was made in September-October 1939. The Working Committee as well as the A.I.C. passed lengthy resolutions, making it clear that "their sympathy is entirely on the side of democracy and freedom. But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom, when that very freedom is denied to her." It refused to rely on mere promises and reminded the British Government of their nonfulfilment of promises after the First World War. It, therefore, invited "the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged—in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present." The A.I.C.C. took an internationalistic view of the situation and demanded "an extension of democracy to all colonial countries and ... the application of the principle of self-determination to them so as to eliminate imperialist control." At no time since the Round Table conference days had India figured so largely in the British press as in the first six weeks since the outbreak of war. The Manchester Guardian, Daily Herald, Times and other English papers wrote severa

1. W.C. resolution, September 15, 1939; The Background of India's Foreign Policy pp. 61-67
2. A.I.C.C. resolution, October 10, 1939; Ibid., p.70
full length editorials. Brailsford wrote long articles in Reynolds Stafford Cripps in the Tribune. They supported the logic, the reasonableness and the inevitability of the Congress demand and insisted that as much as possible and as quickly as possible the demand should be met. The full text was broadcasted by the Moscow radio. The Tass, official Soviet News Agency cabled a very full summary and all Soviet papers including Pravada and Izvestia prominently displayed it. It received the widest possible publicity in U.S.A. The hundred and twenty eight stations of the Columbia Radio broadcasted a very full summary. Numerous editorial comments drew attention to its significance. It was widely published in all European countries.

But the response of the Government, which was embodied in Viceroy Lord Linlithgow's statement of October 17, 1939, proved to be utterly unsatisfactory from the Congress point of view. The Viceroy spoke of the unwisdom and unpracticability of precise definition of war aims at so early a stage. He declared that so far as immediate present was concerned it was not possible to improve upon the scheme embodied in the Act of 1935 and promised that at the end of the war British Government would be willing to enlist the co-operation of political parties to secure necessary modifications. In other words the Government merely promised another Round Table Conference at the end of the war. Th
Congress found that it had no choice left but to dissociate itself from administration and as first step in that direction the working Committee called upon the Congress Ministries to resign.

In fact the outbreak of the Second World War put the Congress into a dilemma and its leaders found themselves divided on the issue of participation in the war. Rajaji believed that the Allied Powers were fighting for democracy and in any case British imperialism was more humane and much more preferable than a fascist victory, hence the Congress should give whole-hearted support to the British Government. On the other hand Subhas Chandra Bose wanted the Congress to take advantage of Britain's difficulty and free the country with the help of Axis Powers.

Nehru advocated conditional support to British War effort. He viewed the war as a conflict between ideologies of democracy and fascism. He was all for democracy and had been a most vehement and consistent critic of fascist aggression. He had very great sympathy for China. He believed that "the final cause (of war) was Nazi aggression" and wanted to throw his lot with the Axis Powers. The Government merely promised another Round-Table Conference at the end of the war. The Congress had to resign.

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1. Refer Harijan, June 21, 1942
2. See Subhash Bose; Indian Struggle (1935-42), pp. 26 to 29
3. J.L. Nehru, The Unity of India, pp. 311-12
full weight on the side of Allies, but on the condition that they prove the sincerity of their democratic professions by extending democracy to India. Patel was supposed to be against any participation in war and in favour of remaining neutral like Ireland till the outcome of war was uncertain. ¹ Gandhi also opposed participation in war, but for different reasons. He had an "unshakable belief that her (India's) destiny is to deliver the message of non-violence to mankind."² He, therefore, advocated a policy of undiluted pacifism and waited the Congress to demonstrate the efficacy of non-violence to the world "by itself declaring that it does not want that India should maintain armed forces to defend her freedom against external aggression and internal disorder."³ The official Congress policy was, however, more or less identified with Nehru's position but tended to come closer to Gandhian viewpoint whenever Congress overtures were rebuffed by the Government. It became a policy of wanting to throw its weight on the side of Allies by active participation in the government

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¹ Refer, Maulana A.K. Azad, India Wins Freedom, p.73
² Harijan, October 12, 1939
³ W.C. resolution, June 21, 1940; The Background of India's Foreign Policy p.78
on certain terms, failing which that of going to the other extreme of practising the doctrine of non-violence. Thus there was an element of contradiction in that policy. On the one hand the Congress desired to see the fascist powers defeated, on the other it was not prepared to miss the opportunity created by the British involvement in war to press the demand for independence. Gandhi's insistence on non-violence further deepened this contradiction.

The second attempt was made in July-August 1940. After April 1940, the war took a serious turn and within a few weeks German forces over-ran Norway, Denmark, Holand and Belgium. In June even mighty France capitulated. At this juncture, when Britain was passing through her blackest hour, the Congress again offered its hand of friendship through a resolution of the Working Committee which was passed at its Delhi session on July 7, and was ratified by the A.I.C.O. at its Poona session on July 28, 1940. The Congress offered "to throw in its full weight in the efforts for the effective organization of the Defence of the country" on two conditions:

to complete independence and (ii) as an immediate measure, the establishment of a provisional National Government at the centre. These "proposals initiated by C. Rajagopalshevari," says Nehru, "'toned down the oft-repeated Congress demand; they were much less than what we had been long claiming." The Congress no longer asked for the declaration of war aims and also watered down the practical implications of its demand of independence in the immediate present.

This Congress offer was a real concession not only because the Congress toned down the immediate implications of its demand of independence but also because it offered to co-operate with the war effort under the teeth of Gandhi's opposition. Gandhi took an absolutely pacifist position and expressed himself positively against the Congress agreeing to undertake responsibility for a violent war effort. The Congress, however, found itself unable to go the wholehog with Gandhi. "This led to a definite and public break with him on this issue." 3

The response of the Government was, however, once again disappointing. On behalf of the British Government Lord Linlithgow made

1. W.C. resolution, July 1940; Congress Bulletin, July 18, 1940, p. 2.
3. Ibid., p. 455.
a new declaration on August 8, 1940. It again played up the commun
differences and adhered to Dominion Status as the goal of constitu­
tional progress. For the immediate present it offered no more th
an invitation to certain number of representative Indians to join
Viceroy's Executive Council and the establishment of a War Advisor
Council. All in all Viceroy's declaration so manifestly failed to
meet the Congress demand that even anti-fascist Nehru "felt that
unless England changed completely there was no common path for us.
We must follow different ways." The Congress again went back to
Gandhi. It patched up its difference with him by declaring that it
"firmly believes in the policy and practice of non-violence not on
in the struggle for Swaraj, but also, in so far as this may be
possible for application in free India... (and) a free India will, therefore
throw all her weight in favour of world disarmament and should she
be prepared to give a lead to the world." Gandhi resumed the leade
ship of the Congress and launched the Individual Civil Disobedien
Movement as a moral and symbolical protest. The movement lasted ti
December 5, 1941 when the Government unexpectedly released the Con
leaders.

1. The Indian Annual Register, 1940, Vol.II, pp.372-73
2. J.L. Nehru, The Discovery of India, p.448
3. A.I.C.C. resolution, September, 16, 1940; Congress Bulletin,
   October 24, 1940, p.5.
In the last week of December 1941 the Working Committee met Bardoli to take stock of the situation. It found that three new factors demanded its consideration. These new factors were: (1) the German invasion of the Soviet Union, (2) the entry of the United States into the war as a combatant and (3) the Japanese advance in Far East. Especially the Japanese advance brought war knocking at very door of India. Under these circumstances Rajaji and Nehru became very eager to make one more attempt to arrive at a settlement with the Government. The Working Committee also came to the conclusion that the ethics of non-violence was inadequate to serve the country against the violence of the enemy. This led to re-enactment of the scenes between it and Gandhi which had taken place in July 1940. The Working Committee relieved Gandhi, at his own request, of the responsibility of guiding the Congress. It expressed its willingness to co-operate with the Government, but made it clear that "only a free and independent India can be in a position to undertake the defence of the country on a national basis and be of help in the furtherance of larger causes that are emerging from the storm of war."  

5. IMMEDIATE BACKGROUND OF THE MISSION

Though almost all the important political leaders of India, as well as the press and public opinion in India, was urging for fresh negotiations regarding India's political deadlock, and also the press and public opinion in England was in favour of the demand, these were not the only reasons for the dispatch of the Mission. In the first place we have now a better idea of the factors which led to the dispatch of the Mission.

The first semi-official, though brief, British account, written by an eminent Professor at Oxford who happened to be in India at the time of the arrival of the Cripps Mission and was taken on its staff and published immediately after its return to the United Kingdom, discreetly avoided any discussion of this matter.¹ All he did by way of portrayal of the immediate background of the Mission was to focus on the attitudes of the Congress and the Muslim League towards the war and towards each other with a view to highlighting their differences. Regardless of this it was generally assumed in Indian political circles that the dispatch of the Mission had been primarily caused by the pressure of American opinion in the wake of sweeping Japanese

¹ R. Coupland, The Cripps Mission (London, 1948). The chief value of this book is that it illustrates the nature of general British propaganda regarding the causes of the failure of the Cripps Mission.
victories in South-East Asia since December 1941. This was confirmed by none else than Winston S. Churchill, head of the British Government at that time, and corroborated by the authorized biographer of His Majesty George VI, quoting from the latter's diary.

Coming to more specialized studies, though V.P. Menon's authoritative account of the transfer of power did not contain any elaborate discussion of the immediate background of the Cripps Mission, it contained enough to indicate the various factors involved: the sweeping Japanese victories; Chinese concern about the Indian political situation; and, finally, "a demand in Britain and the United States of America for a new declaration of policy towards India."

Then, a decade later, H.V. Hodson was more specific and details on these points. He also emphasized the role of Sir Stafford Cripps himself, who began working on a new India policy almost as soon as he became a member of the War Cabinet on 19 February, 1942.


4. V.P. Menon, The Transfer of Power in India (New Delhi, 1957) p. 1

So far as the American part in the dispatch of the Mission is concerned, some of the important documents concerning it had already been published by the US Government along with other documents relating to American interest in India during 1942. By themselves, however, these documents did not enable one to have a full picture even of the impact of the American moves on the crucial decisions relating to the dispatch of the Mission, to talk nothing of the other factors involved.

This has been made possible only by the publication of the first volume of British documents on the transfer of power.

As is well known, Churchill had strongly opposed the concessions to Indian political aspirations made in the Act of 1935 and did not see any reason why the Second World War should see India advancing hurriedly towards complete independence as was being demanded by the Congress. In late 1941 he had at first even opposed the release of Congressmen imprisoned in connection with the Individual Civil Disobedience movement. As the new year opened he continued to feel that no initiative need be taken by Britain for the resolution of the Indian deadlock. But while an imperialist abroad Churchill was a democrat at home, and just as he bowed to the wish of the majority of his senior colleagues regarding the release of the Congress prisoners in 1941,

he did the same with regard to the dispatch of the Cripps Mission, especially since the need for it had been reinforced by the rapidly deteriorating war situation around India and the trend of opinion, official as well as non-official, in the United States.

The first significant steps which ultimately led to the dispatch of the Cripps Mission were taken by the leaders of the British Labour Party who had joined the national World War in December 1941, they began to show increasing concern about the state of affairs in India. On 19, December 1941, while Churchill was heading towards the United States, Ernest Bovin raised the issue of India in the War Cabinet. He mentioned that there was some anxiety in Britain about the situation in India, "both from the point of view of defence and of the Constitutional issue". People were in particular asking whether British policy was "calculated to get the fullest war effort from India". He thought that there was likely to be a demand for a discussion of this issue in the Parliament, and suggested that it might be a good idea if the War cabinet had "a general discussion on the position at the first convenient opportunity."

Churchill clearly saw danger in this move and, while still in the United States, sent a telegram to the Deputy Prime Minister Clement R. Attlee, on 7th January 1942, warning him of "the danger of raising constitutional issues, still more of making constitutional changes, in India at a moment when enemy is upon the frontier". He scotched the idea that there might be an appreciable increase in India's war effort if the Congress was put in charge. On the contrary, he expressed the fear that it might indeed have the contrary result as it would mean the entry of a "hostile political element into the defence machine". The Indian troops, he emphasized, were fighting splendidly, but their allegiance was to the King Emperor and "the rule of the Congress and Hindu Priesthood would never be tolerated by a fighting race." Churchill also assured his Cabinet colleagues in London that they were not going to have any trouble with American opinion. He wrote "All press comments on India I have seen have been singularly restrained, especially since they entered the war. Thought here is concentrated on winning the war as soon as possible".  

Both the Viceroy in New Delhi and the Secretary of State for India in London held similar views. Giving his appreciation of the  

Indian political situation in the light of recent developments and stressing as usual the differences between the Congress and the Muslim League, Lord Linlithgow telegraphed to L.S. Amery on January 1942: "My general conclusion viewing this difficult matter with greatest detachment that I can, and with full sense of its implications, is in these circumstances that we should stand firm and make no further move". Next day Amery communicated to Churchill that he entirely agreed with Linlithgow that "there is nothing to be done at this moment."

This line of approach, however, failed to satisfy Attlee. In a strongly worded communication to Amery on 24 January 1942 he remarked that the general effect of the Viceroy's appreciation did not increase his confidence in the matter's judgement. Describing Linlithgow as defeatist, Attlee suggested that it was worth considering "whether someone should not be charged with a mission to try to bring the political leaders together." He finally warned "There is a lot of opinion here which he cannot ignore, which is not satisfied that there is nothing to be done but to sit tight on the declaration of August 1940.

2. British Documents on Cripps Mission: Document No.27 Mr. Amery to Mr. Churchill January 22, 1942, p.54.
This opinion exists in your Party as well as mine. While Amery was not convinced by this line of argument and submitted a lengthy memorandum to the War Cabinet on 28 January 1942 based on the same old reasoning contained in the Viceroy's dispatch, Attlee continued to press for a fresh British initiative as soon as possible and circulated his own memorandum to the War Cabinet on 2nd February 1942. "While I have little or no faith in the value of gestures," remarked Attlee, "I do consider that now is the time for an act of statesmanship. To mark time is to lose India". A fresh effort was clearly needed. For this purpose he suggested that a representative with power to negotiate within wide limits should be sent out to India now, "either as a special envoy or in replacement of the present Viceroy", and that a Cabinet Committee should be appointed to draw up terms of reference and powers. There was precedent for such action: "Lord Durham saved Canada to the British Empire. We need a man to do in India what Durham did in Canada".

Without accepting all of Attlee's suggestions the War

1. British Documents on Cripps Mission: Document Number: 35: Mr. Attlee to Mr. Amery: 24 January, 1942: p. 75
Cabinet, at its meeting on 5 February 1942, recorded the view that it was dangerous to stand on the present position without making every effort to see whether some way out of the present constitutional deadlock could not be found. On the other hand, it also noted that it was difficult to see what further step could be taken in the constitutional field which would not prejudice the ultimate position. "It was clearly impossible to attempt any final settlement of the constitutional position at the present moment." Thus was a compromise struck between the opposite standpoints of Attlee and Amery.

6. CHINA'S SYMPATHY :-

While consultations as to the nature of the next step were taking place between London and New Delhi, Singapore fell on 15 February, followed by increased Japanese threat to Rangoon. Sir Stafford Cripps joined the War Cabinet four days later. Marshal Chiang Kai-shek ended his fortnight's visit to India on 21 February with a statement to the Press expressing the hope that Britain "without waiting for any demands on part of people of India will as speedily as possible give them real political powers."

1. War Cabinet W.M. (42) 10th Conclusions, Minutest-3, P.118
2. Press statement issued by Marshal Chiang Kai-shek on 21st February, 1942
Immediately after his return to China, Chiang Kai-shek asked the Chinese Ambassador in London, Wellington Koo, to convey to Churchill, through Cripps, his frank view that if the Indian political problem was not immediately and urgently solved, the danger would be daily increasing. "If the British Government should wait until the Japanese planes begin to bomb India and the Indian morale collapses, it would already be too late." On 25 February, the Chinese Foreign Minister, T.V. Soong, who happened to be in the US capital at that time, conveyed the text of this message to President Roosevelt as well. While doing so, he added these words, among others, conveyed by Chiang Kai-shek for the consideration of the US President: "If the British Government does not fundamentally change their policy towards India, it would be like presenting India to the enemy and inviting them to quickly occupy India."

7. AUSTRALIA, CANADA AND AFGHANISTAN'S VIEW

The Minister for External Affairs of Australia had, in the House of Representatives, expressed his Government attitude toward the India problem in the following terms:

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1. Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers
   Vol. 1, PP. 604-6
"We recognize and sympathise with the aspirations of the Indian people to become one of the self-governing British nation and as such to take part in the defences of the Allied cause in Asia."¹

The opinion of the Canadian Government was also in favour of the Indian aspirations. It was their belief that a fully self-governing India had a great part to play in free and equal association with the other Nations of the British Commonwealth and that a free India fighting along side the other free peoples of the world would strengthen immeasurably the common cause.²

The Prime Minister of Afghanistan was convinced that for successful defence of India it was essential that interests of Government and people should be similarly united. He refused to believe that if legitimate aspiration of India were met the country would at any time in foreseeable future wish to separate itself from British Commonwealth of Nations. He had full sympathy with the Indian aspirations.³

Here one can see that as the war was taking a bad turn for the Allies: not only China but other countries like Canada,

Australia and Afghanistan too joined in sympathising with the Indian aspirations. Both idealism and self-interest impelled these nations to tell the British Government that something should be done to meet the Indian aspirations. Though Churchill could ignore these nations, it was impossible for him to ignore America's views on this issue.

8. AMERICAN PRESSURE:

As far back as 7th May, 1941, if not before, Mr. Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State, U.S.A., took up with "the British Government the possibility of a prompt recognition of India's aspiration to a freer existence and a full membership in the British family of nations." The President also "indicated his sympathy with this general line." But although Hull took up the matter twice with the British Government, nothing was done on account of "wide division in the British cabinet."1

In February 1942, Churchill was positively hostile to the idea of a provisional national Government for India. He was also not in favour of raising constitutional issues at this critical period. When President Roosevelt first raised the Indian issue with him during his visit to Washington in December, 1941, Churchill

did not receive it well. But with the rapid advance of Japan, public opinion in America began to show great concern about India and the American Government took the liberty of advising the British Government on the Indian issue. Churchill definitely did not relish it and writes that, states "which have no overseas colonies or possessions are capable of rising to mood of great elevation and detachment about the affairs of those who have."

But on the 25th February, at a meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of America, there appeared what was described by the Assistant Secretary of State, Breckinridge Long, as "a serious undercurrent of anti-British feeling." The dominant feel in the Committee was that the United States "should demand that India be given a status of autonomy. The only way to get the peo of India to fight was to get them to fight for India." The Assis Secretary of State added:

"The unanimity of opinion among the members of the Commi present and the length to which their arguments led them is a matter which might well be taken note of because it looks as if might flare up and be used by some members of the Committee not

an attack on Great Britain but as an attack against the administration for its alleged failure to take advantage of the position of power in which it finds itself and for having failed to use the force of its authority in arranging for large-scale military support of the manpower which the United States is now putting into the Far East.

By midnight the State Department transmitted the following message from the President to the US Ambassador in London, John Gilbert Winant:

As you may guess, I am somewhat concerned over the situation in India, especially in view of the possibility of a slow retreat through Burma into India itself. From all I can gather the British defence will not have a sufficiently enthusiastic support from the people of India themselves.

In the greatest confidence could you or Harriman (President Special Representative in London) or both let me have a slant on what the Prime Minister thinks about the new relationships between Britain and India? I hesitate to send him a direct message because in a strict sense, it is not our business. It is, however, of great interest to us from the point of view of the conduct of the war.  

1. Foreign Relations of the United States pp.606-7
2. Ibid p.604
Now Churchill was facing cumulative pressure from Allied Governments, from his cabinet colleagues from British Public opinion the pressure, which he did not welcome at heart. But, in fact, the help of U.S.A. was then the only hope for the safety of Britain, so he could ignore Roosevelt's advice only at his country's peril. The Americans were now fully in the war and had already stationed a large contingent of their air force in India.

Thus when on the morning of 26 February, Harriman saw Churchill and was informed that discussions were going on in the Cabinet regarding the steps to be taken and that the final decisions were still to be arrived at. As soon as that happened, Churchill would himself inform Roosevelt. 1

Now things moved really swiftly in London. Already, on 25 February, Churchill had set up the India Committee of the Cabinet under Attlee's chairmanship, and by 28 February this committee agreed on the text of a draft declaration, which was transmitted to the Viceroy for his comments. By 2 March, these comments had arrived and been considered, and Attlee was in a position to circulate the revised text to the members of the War Cabinet. On the same day Ame wrote to Linlithgow explaining the factors responsible for such swift action:

1. Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic papers: P. 608
'I expect your head is in a whirl, as is mine, over the developments of the last few days. There is a certain sense of humour in that Winston, after making infinite difficulties for both of us in respect of whatever constructive suggestions we put forward, has now, as is his wont—seen the red light (specially the American red light) overnight. There is equal humour in the fact that Attlee and Co., from whom I had practically no support before, are now in full cry behind Cripps in clamouring for the maximum.'

The War cabinet had decided in view of difficulties and objections which the Viceroy and others had indicated not to proceed with the publication of the declaration. The Prime Minister was to make announcement on 11th March to the effect that the War Cabinet had their plan for solving the deadlock but were not for the time being at any rate publishing anything but were sending out Sir S. Cripps to endeavour to see if he could by negotiation with Indian political leaders secure a sufficient body of agreement upon their policy.

A day before the actual announcement of the Cripps Mission i.e on 10th March 1942 Amery send several other telegrams to the Viceroy

1. British Document Number :218 Mr. Amery to the Marques of Linlithgow, 2 March 1942, F. 295
These telegrams are very significant. In these telegrams he describes what actually the offer is and declares that it would be rejected by the congress. He gives hint to the Viceroy:

"Sir Stafford Cripps will be going out not on a roving mission but with the plan embodies in the draft declaration as his general instructions. His further general instructions as to the interpretation to be put on paragraph(e) of the draft declaration will be sent in a separate telegram and will of course hav to be discussed with you in details."¹

In another despatch of that day he wrote to the Viceroy revealing that the Cripps offer was in essence a fairly conservative one and was not made without grudge or compulsion. More over pakistan ouakoos' egg was in it.

In his opinion the offer will be 'more probably rejected's 'We shall have shown our good will to the world and India.'

Before sending Cripps to India, Secretary of State for Ind had invited him to dine and had a long intimate talk with him.

Narrating this he wrote to the Viceroy.

"Have just had long talk with Cripps who I am convinced is determined to be helpful and quite prepared to face unpopularity with the left wingers which may result from identifying himself with a policy falling so far short of their crude ideas."

On the same day, Amery wrote a lengthy letter to the Viceroy explaining the whole situation and the Government policy. In this letter he revealed why Cripps was selected to sell this conservative policy to India. In his own words:

"From the point of view of putting across what is essential a conservative policy, both as regards the future and as regards the immediate refusal to transfer control of the Executive there is much to be said for sending out someone who was always been on extreme left Winger and in close touch with Nehru and the Congress. The immediate effect on your Moslims, as with my Tory friends here, may be alarming, but the result in the end should be both to increase the chances of success, slight as they are, and to mitigate any blame thrown upon the Government as a whole for failure."

Further assuring the Viceroy, he wrote:

"I think Cripps fully realise the difficulties in front of him, and the prospect of his being denounced both by Congress in India and by the Left Wing here, for having lent himself to so reactionary and limited a policy. I have just been having a long intimate talk with him and I feel confident that he really means to play" the game by the Government policy and by you. 1

Here we can clearly see that, in fact Cripps was selected only to make a loud bark about the offer, which was in essence a fairly conservative one, and was not made without grudge or compulsion. The Cabinet had tied his hands with the draft declaration. Moreover Turnbull, first Private Secretary, of Amery was to come to India with Cripps to warn him of the possible consequences of a mistake. Moreover Amery wrote to the Viceroy:

"No doubt you will also be turning Hodson on to him, who by now must know a great deal about the personalities whom Cripps could most easily influence to begin with, so as to secure their support with the more intractable ones afterwards.

Trying to convince the Viceroy for this rush, the Secretary

of State gave real reason of decision to send the Cripps Mission to India. HSp wrote:

The fact is that when you and I at the beginning of the year took the view that for the moment there was nothing to be done, we did so both in view of the merits of the situation in India itself and also in view of Winston's own vehement attitude as indicated not only by our difficulties over the release of prisoners, but by his special telegram to you while he was away in America: Meanwhile, the pressure outside, upon Winston from Roosevelt, and upon Attlee & Co, from their own party, plus the admission of Cripps to the War Cabinet, suddenly opened the sluice gates and the thing moved with a rust.1

Thus looking to the terribly serious situation developed for Allies in the East, and considering the cumulative pressure upon the Government Churchill had decided to send Cripps Mission to India.

For Amery and the British Government the success or the failure of the negotiations between Cripps and Indian leaders was not important. They were only interested in 'clearing the air' and in successful war efforts. Therefore...

1. Ibid., pp. 402 -4
On the same day Churchill also telegraphed to Linlithgow:

"It would be impossible, owing to unfortunate rumours and public
and the general American outlook, to stand on a purely negative
attitude and the Cripps Mission is indispensable to prove our
honesty of purpose and to gain time for the necessary consultat-
tions."¹

9. ANNOUNCEMENT OF CRIPPS MISSION :

Meanwhile in his cable of 11th March to Churchill, President
Roosevelt, cited the differences of British colonies on the eve
the American War of Independence and emphasises that the present
constitution of the U.S.A. emerged with the assent of just two
thirds of the States in the convention set up in 1787. Drawing
upon the analogy of America he suggested setting up a representa
temporary government in India and its recognition as a temporary
Dominion Government. This government was to be charged with the
task of constituting a body to consider a more permanent govern
for the whole country. He wanted the provisional government to
have definite executive and administrative powers."² Such a str
representation from the head of a great State whose support was

¹ The text of this telegram has been published by Churchill in
his war memoirs, See Churchill W.S. War memoirs p. 215
² Churchill, W.S. War Memoirs : The hinge of fate, pp. 188-89
vital to the very existence of Great Britain could obviously not be ignored. The President did not question India's fitness to rule herself and establish herself as a great democratic nation. He trusted to future to disperse the jarring elements of her national life into a coherent polity. The President's solicitude for India was also inspired by his desire to invest the crusade against fascism with a democratic halo. He wanted London to take the initiative in the matter so that "There should be no criticism in India that it is being made grudgingly or by compulsion".¹

Thus, it becomes crystal clear that, continuous defeats in war, cumulative pressure from within the cabinet and outside nations, particularly pressure from America, compelled Churchill to announce the Cripps Mission for India. The War Cabinet decided to depute Sir Stafford Cripps to proceed to India and secure by negotiation with Indian leaders agreement upon its policy.

Mr. Churchill made his announcement in the House of Commons on March 11, 1942, that the War Cabinet had agreed unitedly upon

¹. Ibid., p.189
conclusions for present and future action in India which they considered "a just and final solution" and that the Lord Privy Seal would be going to India soon to secure the assent of Indian Leaders to these proposals. The news was widely welcome in India, with no one striking a jarring note. Announcement about the Mission was hailed by British Press as a momentous announcement, as a dramatic stroke against the tide of Savagery from the East.