CHAPTER 1
Relations between the United States and India have been a constant subject of debate between the two countries. Despite common commitment to democracy, India and the United States have been likened to "Unfriendly Friends" and Recently these have been called "Estranged Democracies". Their relationship had a "roller coaster character with many ups and downs" during the last four decades.

The Second World War brought India into the orbit of American attention. It occupied a strategic position in the allied war effort against the Axis powers. Even before the Pearl Harbor and their actual participation, the Americans realized the strategic importance of India, and the valuable contribution she could make to the war effort. F.D. Roosevelt's administration was compelled to respond to the demands of the Indian Freedom Movement. During and after the Second World War, nationalism frequently presented a dilemma to the American Government and public, for in many instances independence movements challenged the empires of nations allied to the United States. In defining its policy towards Indian nationalism, the U.S. dilemma was to choose between supporting a prized ally and aiding a nationalist movement seeking independence from that ally. It was impossible for the United States to successfully interfere in the imperial affairs of its allies.
Nationalism, however, had appealed to American idealism. Wartime encounters do not provide ideal conditions for balanced relationships between the countries. Inspite of being a known supporter of greater concessions to India, F.D. Roosevelt was hesitant to press too hard the Indian cause because of the fear of offending British sensibilities. The United States was brought into its initial encounter with the question on Sunday December 7, 1941. The very symbol of the Imperial order and the heart of the British Empire - India, was demanding independence from America's ally, Great Britain refused to grant independence which in turn brought India into open and non-violent rebellion. Indian impasse placed America in an awkward position. The American response came to be regarded as a critical test of allied war aims. The United States was called upon to uphold the integrity of the Atlantic Charter's vaguely phrased self determination. Winston Churchill refused to implement the Atlantic Charter in respect of India, which in turn raised doubts as to whether the United Nations was seeking to preserve or to end imperialism. F.D. Roosevelt received a note from his wife after his return from the Atlantic Conference, inquiring, about his position on India. F.D. Roosevelt wrote:

"I cannot have probable feelings on India".  

The necessity for full cooperation among all non-Axis nations and the prospect of a continued Japanese
advance towards South Asia brought India into military as well as political significance. Accordingly the United States assumed a more active role in British - Indian relations during the first five months of the Pacific war, which culminated in the April, 1942, mission of Louis Johnson to India. Johnson as the F.D. Roosevelt’s "personal representative" to India, tried to bring about a settlement during and after the unsuccessful British mission headed by Sir Stafford Cripps. This official concern reflected an unparalleled public interest in India. There was an increase in articles on India in 1942. The American periodicals carried three times as many articles as they had in 1941; editorial comment was extensive, and the public opinion polls showed a high degree of awareness of Indian developments.

During Churchill’s visit to America in late December, 1941, initial concern regarding India was expressed briefly by F.D. Roosevelt but the Prime Minister promptly explained the necessity for the continuation of British rule. According to Churchill,

"I reacted so strongly and at such length that he never raised it again".  

The working committee of the Indian National Congress was meeting at Bardoli, while F.D. Roosevelt and Churchill conferred in Washington. As the Bardoli session
began on December 23, Rangoon was bombed by the Japanese, and on Christmas Day Hongkong fell. The Congress resolution on December 30 reaffirmed its willingness to support the Allied war effort in return for recognition of independence.

The United States State Department on January 8, instructed the American Commissioner at New Delhi to report extensively on the political situation, particularly the popular strength of Gandhi and his Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. The American and British Chiefs of staff agreed on January 12, 1942, that only minimum resources necessary for safeguarding Asian interests should be diverted from operations against Germany, Japan should be prevented from conquering Singapore, the East Indies, the Philippines, and Burma. However, considerable assistance was required from the United States for India’s potential contribution to this effort. A month earlier Girja Shankar Bajpai had emphasized this point in drawing State Department’s attention to Indian Government report on India’s war effort. F.D. Roosevelt directed in late January that further study be made of the question of military assistance to India.

The visit of Chiang Kai-Shek to India and the fall of Singapore on February 15, focussed the attention of the Press, State Department, and Senate Foreign Relations Committee on India, which in return led F.D. Roosevelt to raise the Indian question again with Churchill. After the
fall of Singapore and the surrender of the supposedly impregnable naval base left the remainder of Malaya, Burma, and India vulnerable to further Japanese onslaught. Walter Lippman in his "Post-Singapore War in the East", argued that unless the United States assumed responsibility for the War in Asia, it would be difficult to reorient or overhaul the British imperial policy. The same sentiment was echoed in the Hearst newspapers, in the editorials in The Christian Science Monitor and the New York Journal and American. More attention was focussed on the Indian question during the visit of Chiang Kai-Shek, who was highly respected in America for his nation’s resistance to the Japanese. His main intention was primarily to discuss military operations with the Indian Government. He also sought to persuade Nehru and Gandhi to support the war effort. The Churchill government on the other hand insisted that the meetings with the nationalist leaders be arranged through the Imperial government. This was because of Chiang Kai-Shek’s known inclination towards the Indian National Congress. F.D. Roosevelt, however, encouraged Chiang’s visit; upon receiving word of the fall of Singapore, he cabled Churchill that the mission would be useful. Chiang did meet Nehru and Gandhi, despite British reservations. Chiang informed F.D. Roosevelt through his ambassador in Washington, T.V. Soong that he had been shocked by the military and political
situation, which he believed could be improved if the British transferred political responsibility and did not allow different parties in India to cause confusion.

Adolph A. Berle, Assistant Secretary to State again urged that the United States to bring pressure on the British, while Chiang Kai-Shek was in India. Thomas Wilson the U.S. Commissioner at New Delhi reported the increasing Indian resentment of the British and the first criticism in the Indian Press of seeming American indifference. Berle drafted a memorandum arguing that the fall of Singapore warranted another American approach to the Churchill government on the Indian situation. The American ambassador in London, John Gilbert Winant, got a cable from the White House on February 25, that ambassador W. Averell Harriman, serving as the president’s special representative dealing with matters related to Lend-Lease for the British Empire, should confidentially discuss with Churchill the possibility of a new approach to the Indian problem. Chiang’s parting comments were also being reported in America and his message was received at the White House on February 25. Exasperation was expressed with British policy by several members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senators Tom Connally, Arthur Vandenberg, Theodore Greene, Wallace White, and Robert La Follette Jr., argued at a closed session that the extensive to Britain justified participation in imperial decisions.
The attitude of Churchill ran counter to the sentiments of the Senators, Chiang Kai-Shek, the State Department Officials, the White House, and the consensus of the American Press. Churchill prefaced his description of the American overtures thus:

"Before Pearl Harbor, India had been regarded as a lamentable example of British imperialism, but as an exclusive British responsibility. Now that the Japanese were advancing towards its frontiers the United States government began to express its views and offer counsel on Indian affairs. In countries where there is only one race, broad and lofty views are taken of the color question. Similarly, states which have no overseas colonies or possessions are capable of rising to moods of great elevation and detachment about the affairs of those who have."

Harriman on February 26, discussed the Indian question with Churchill. The Prime Minister retorted that Britain could not risk alienation of the Muslims, who were three fourth of the total manpower of the Indian army. Moreover, India had ample manpower ready to fight the Japanese, the real problem was training and equipping an enlarged Indian army. The American concern with India failed to lessen in spite of Churchill's adverse reaction to Roosevelt's gesture. The United States moved on the Indian question at four levels during late February and early March 1942: continued contact with the British on Indian policy, Roosevelt's suggestion of a specific policy to Churchill, the designation of an American economic and supply mission to India, and the appointment of Louis Johnson as the President's Personal Representative to India.
The Churchill government on seeing the military situation worsening, considered making another effort to settle the Indian question. President Roosevelt was informed by Churchill on February 4, that he was contemplating a declaration of post war dominion status, but reaffirmed that British could not abandon its obligations to the Muslims, untouchables, and princes of India. Without favouring any change in policy, Churchill got together a committee to plan a special mission to India, which was to be headed by Sir Stafford Cripps. The other members were Leopold S. Amery, Clement Attlee, and former Indian officials, John Anderson and P.J. Grigg. The viceroy was also informed about the British Government’s plan on March 10, 1942.

American newsmen became more critical of British policy and some called upon F.D. Roosevelt to exert his influence. Journalists were not at all aware of the fact that F.D. Roosevelt had already suggested a definite Indian policy to Churchill. Roosevelt wrote a lengthy letter which drew parallels between the Indian situation and that of the American colonies immediately after their independence. This letter was written as a response to the Churchill’s argument of India’s diversity and the inability of the Indian National Congress to represent all Indian groups. The President suggested that a temporary dominion government, bringing together different castes, occupations, religions, and representing the British provinces and princely states...
could function for a few years or until the end of the war, when it would set up a body to consider the formation of a permanent government. Roosevelt then closed,

"For the love of Heaven don't bring me into this, though I do want to be of help. It is, strictly speaking, a none of my business, except insofar as it is a part and parcel of the successful fight that you and I are making".

However, because of the limitations in Roosevelt's message, Amery claimed later that the Cripps plan reflected the essence of the Roosevelt suggestion.

Roosevelt decided to send Louis Johnson and an American Economic and Production Mission to India at the time of his message to Churchill. Earlier, it was decided by the State Department that Johnson would head the economic mission and he would also replace Wilson as the American Commissioner in New Delhi. Johnson, was designated as Chairman of the Economic and Production Mission, but there was no mention regarding his diplomatic function. The acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles decided that Johnson should not head both the economic mission and the diplomatic post at New Delhi. The March 9 press release was reversed and Assistant Secretary of State Henry F. Grady was made the Chairman of the Economic Mission. The State Department announced on March 24 that Johnson would serve as the Personal Representative of the President to the Government of India.
Much publicity was given by the Press to the proposed missions and the United States was seen as taking a hand in Indian politics. The coverage of the Cripps Mission was also extensive. As Cripps had long championed nationalist aspirations, his nomination was received favourably in the United States, Britain, and India. Cripps was a friend of Nehru and he shared with Gandhi a deeply religious approach to life. He understood the legal and psychological complexities of Indian politics.

The Cripps Mission reached New Delhi on March 22, 1942. The plan was explained to the Government of India by Cripps and it also held talks with the Indian leaders. Reports on the apparent trends were sent by the American Mission at New Delhi, while the State Department’s concern was focussed on determining the strength of the Muslim League. It was concluded in the memorandum of the department’s British Empire Section and the Division of Near Eastern Affairs that the Muslim League will speak for the Muslims. Lord Halifax sent an advance copy to Welles asking that it be brought to F.D. Roosevelt’s attention. The American officer at New Delhi reported that after their conversations with Cripps, Jinnah appeared pleased and Azad downcast. Cripps presented the draft declaration at a press conference on March 29. The declaration affirmed that the goal of British policy remained the creation of an Indian Union as an independent dominion. An Indian body representing British India and the princely states would
draft a new constitution at the conclusion of the war. It was also said that any province could if liked remain outside the proposed union and would retain the right to form its own government. There will be a treaty between the British and the Indian Constitution Making Body. They would protect religious and racial minorities. However, it was not possible to bring about major changes during the war. The control of the Defense was to remain with the British. It was hoped that all the Indian political groups would cooperate in supporting the war effort. The Cripps offer met almost unanimous favourable response in U.S. It was hailed as a proof of the British’s sincerity and as an offer of reasonable compromise which should be accepted by the Indian National Congress. The New Republic, argued that the Indian National Congress could not reject a plan which permitted provinces the right of nonaccession, for that would be inconsistent with the avowed belief in democracy of the Congress. The Nation, described the offer as reasonable and the nonaccession principle as a necessary guarantee for minorities. Time, Newsweek, The Christian Science Monitor, The Los Angeles Times, The New York Times and The New York Herald Tribune, all viewed the plan as an enlightened departure from British imperial policy. Several senators also approved the plan. Welles told the press on March 30, that the American government hoped it would be a satisfactory solution to the Indian problem. Kate Mitchell in Amerasia and the Christian Century interpreted the Cripps
offer from the Indian National Congress viewpoint. They were of the opinion that this would encourage the division of India, leave real power in the British hands, and it was not different from the earlier offer of August 1940. The dominant mood was expressed in a *New York Times* editorial:

"But we can see the simple things that make for human brotherhood are good and true in India as in our country; and we can say to the Indian leaders that if they refuse this gift of freedom for petty, or personal, or spiteful reasons, they will lose the American sympathy and the offer of American comradeship that is now theirs for the asking."

On the contrary, the findings of the American institute of Public Opinion indicated that the public in general was in favor of immediate dominion status. The Institute conducted a poll on March 31. Two samples were asked whether they had heard of the plan to give self-government to India, and, if so, whether dominion status should be granted immediately or after the war is over. While the term "dominion status" may not have been fully understood, and some may have viewed it as less than full independence, the two samples indicated that a majority of those familiar with the question inclined towards Indian National Congress position (see Table 1).

Table 1 Sample of American Opinion, March 31, 1942.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Familiar with plan</th>
<th>Sample-A</th>
<th>Sample-B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favor dominion status now</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favor dominion status after war</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never favor dominion status</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t say when</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfamiliar with subject</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Unequivocal praise was conferred on the Cripps offer, within the State Department. There was buoyancy both in the State Department and in the American Press. Unfortunately this buoyancy contrasted sharply with the response of the Indian National Congress. This difference in opinion illustrated the degree to which much of American and Indian nationalist opinion had become estranged. Gandhi labelled it as a "post-dated cheque". The American Mission at New Delhi reported to Washington that the Congress Working Committee is going to reject this offer. Lord Halifax on the other hand predicted the failure of the mission even before the Congress could give any official reply. He blamed the Congress for the failure, during a chat with Welles on April 1. The Congress Working Committee officially denounced the offer on April 2. The reasons behind this rejection were the nonaccession and defense provisions. However, it also said that it would continue the negotiations so that an interim settlement could be reached. So arrangements were made to hold conferences between Nehru and General Archibald Wavell, Commander in Chief in India to delineate a division of responsibility between an Indian defense minister and the Commander in Chief.

Louis Johnson reached New Delhi on April 3, in this crisis tinged with cautious optimism. Johnson quickly assumed an active role in the delicate negotiations, inspite
of having any experience in the art of diplomacy. He was also lacking in knowledge of Indian politics. However, he was aware of the deep interest Roosevelt had in the Indian situation. Having met Cripps twice and Wavell once on April 4, Johnson concluded that Roosevelt should ask Churchill to bring about some modifications in the Cripps Plan. The three British options, which were suggested by Cripps to Churchill, were also intimated to Roosevelt. The three options on the defense issue were: first, not to grant any concessions; second, the control of the Defence Ministry be given to India, provided that India agreed not to interfere with imperial war policy; third, the Defence Ministry was to be converted into a War Ministry under the Commander in Chief, thereby turning the defence ministership into an innocuous position to be given to an Indian. Cripps was in the favor of the second, but he also feared that the British Cabinet, Commander in Chief, and Viceroy would oppose both the second and third options. He confided to Johnson that only if Roosevelt influences Churchill to accept the second option, the mission could be saved. Roosevelt declined to intercede. Yet Johnson became a mediator between Cripps, Wavell, Lord Linlithgow, Azad and Nehru. He worked relentlessly from the fifth to the tenth of April, to make the Cripps mission a success. All the leaders of the Congress were informed by Johnson of the revisions that were being made in the defense formula on April 5 & 6. The third
option was chosen. In addition, one Indian was to serve in the British War Cabinet, handling questions dealing with Indian defense, and another was to serve on the U.N. Pacific War Council. As he was sure that the plan would be rejected by the Indian National Congress, he secured a promise from Nehru that until he had had an opportunity to confer with various leaders, the Indian National Congress would not formally reject the revised offer.

The Congress found the revised plan unacceptable, which was offered by Cripps on April 7. In order to secure a compromise plan, Johnson, took the initiative. With Cripps approval he went to Wavell and Lord Linlithgow and was able to convince them that the Indian defense minister’s responsibilities should be enlarged. He also assured them that this is not going to hinder with the military operations. Johnson carried this suggestion on the morning of April 8, and in the afternoon Cripps formally presented the second revised defense plan.

Johnson’s maneuverings in Delhi produced hope for a settlement but in London it produced consternation. Harry Hopkins met Churchill on April 9, and he was questioned about Johnson’s authority to mediate. Hopkins assured Churchill that Johnson would not mediate unless Churchill asks him and after assurances from both sides that his mediation could be accepted. The British Cabinet considered
the revised plan and rejected it. The Johnson formula was withdrawn and Cripps stunned Nehru, Azad, and Johnson on the evening of April 9, with a terse statement that the original defense offer would stand. Johnson was embittered and furious. He cabled Roosevelt that "London wanted a Congress refusal". Cripps accused Nehru of seeking Johnson’s help to secure what the Congress was incapable of gaining on its own. He also spoke of the tyranny of the Indian National Congress. Johnson and Churchill sent conflicting interpretation on the breakdown to Roosevelt. The Prime Minister called the President on April 10, that the Congress’ rejection was based on the failure to attain a national government and not merely on the defense issue. Johnson’s report on the compromise also reached Roosevelt the next morning. There was condemnation of the British and the suggestion that Churchill and the viceroy had undermined Cripps. Besides Johnson, Berle and Paul Alling of the Near Eastern Affairs also urged for intervention on the part of Roosevelt to break this deadlock. Roosevelt cabled Churchill on April 11, urging him to reopen the negotiations and challenged his interpretations of the failure:

... I most earnestly hope that you may find it possible to postpone Cripps’ departure from India until one more final effort has been made to prevent a breakdown in negotiations.

I am sorry to say that I cannot agree with the point of view set forth in your message to me that public opinion in the United States believes that the negotiations have failed on broad general
issues. The general impression here is quite the contrary. The feeling is almost universally held that the deadlock has been caused by the unwillingness of the British Government to concede to the Indians the right of self-government, notwithstanding the willingness of the Indians to entrust technical, military, and naval defence control to the competent British authorities. American public opinion cannot understand why, if the British Government is willing to permit the component parts of India to secede from the British Empire after the war, it is not willing to permit them to enjoy what is tantamount to self-government during the war...

Roosevelt’s appeal was responded by Churchill officially in a very polite tone; but in his War Memoirs he scorned at Roosevelt’s ideas. The Cripps mission failed to produce a British Indian agreement, but it had an effect on Indian American political relations. Roosevelt was disappointed at the failure of the mission. In his letter to the British Prime Minister, dated 11.4.42, he conveyed his feelings.

Nehru wrote a letter to the President of the United States, to show what great hopes the people of India entertained about the outcome of the interest that the United States Government was showing:

"Dear Mr. President", Nehru began, "I am venturing to write to you as I know that you are deeply interested in the Indian situation today and its reactions on the war. The failure of the Cripps Mission to bring about a settlement between the British Government and the Indian people must have distressed you as it distressed us".

Gandhi also expected much from Roosevelt’s intervention. He wrote to him:

The Allied Troops will remain in India during the war under the treaty with the Free India Government that may be formed by the people of Indian without any outside interference, direct or indirect.

It is on behalf of this proposal that I write this to enlist your active sympathy.

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To this Roosevelt replied on August 1, 1942.

I am sure that you will agree that the United States has consistently striven for and supported policies of fair dealing, of fair play, and of all related relations between nations .... I shall hope that our common interest in democracy and righteousness will enable your countrymen and mine to make common cause against a common enemy.

The Indian question had become entangled with the military effort, for the Americans. India became a base of American army operations, in the first six months of 1942. For the preservation of Allied control over the Middle East, the security of India was of utmost importance. The Allies were alarmed by the specter of an Axis military link in the Middle East, as Germany had advanced across North Africa toward Suez and Japan had completed its conquest of Southeast Asia.

American concern persisted, given the constant Japanese menace. After the failure of the Cripps mission, many newspapers and journals lost interest in the Indian political problem. "Rather the consensus of press comment in May and June, 1942 shifted to the Congress position". The Indian journalists Syed Hossain in FREE WORLD and Anup Singh in ASIA, and the scholarly English spokesman for the Congress H.N. Brailsford in NEW REPUBLIC argued the Congress’ case against the British offer. In PACIFIC AFFAIRS, Michael Greenberg; a Cambridge University Fellow and member of the International Secretariat of the Institute
of Pacific Relations, summarized the Congress and British positions but with an evident pro-Congress bias. In an article appearing in *American Mercury* and reprinted in *Reader’s Digest*, Time-Life correspondent Allan Michie blamed both sides for the impasse yet emphasized Britain’s long delay in seeking an accord. Observing that the Congress had been criticized in America, an article in *TIME* detailed the nationalist’s objections to the Cripps plan. An editorial in *The Christian Century* maintained that the United States had to clarify its anti-colonial position, while *The New Republic* called for Roosevelt’s intervention and for an American presence at renewed negotiations. In *Asia* the philosopher Bertrand Russell suggested that the deadlock could be resolved by a United States guarantee of post war independence. Editorially and through Hossain’s article, *Free World*, the organ of the Free World Association, urged United States intervention and a guarantee of independence. Further official involvement was called for by the Vice President Henry Wallace, in a speech before the Free World Association. He emphasized America’s obligation to end imperialism in all forms. Many looked to the United States for support. *Amrita Bazaar Patrika* (Calcutta); May 19, 1942 carried an editorial predicting that the United States will pressurize Great Britain to seek a settlement and America would actively mediate in future negotiations. The post
mortem reports on the Cripps mission were presented by Louis Johnson, Girja Shankar Bajpai, and Graham Spry, at the State Department. Girja Shankar Bajpai blamed Nehru and Rajagopalachari for the failure and feared that an interim government might fail and sought to place responsibility for the deadlock on the British. Spry, a Canadian who had served as special assistant to Cripps, maintained that the Congress worked to avoid the political responsibility during the war. He further said that any action on India would be futile. Johnson on May 26 visited the State Department and had detailed talks with Wallace Murray, W. Leonard Parker, Calvin Oakes, and Alling of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs. He reiterated his view that the Cripps mission was sabotaged by the British, by not supporting the 'Johnson formula' and other compromises accepted by Cripps.

The ranking officer at New Delhi, George Merrell, and Donovan from Bombay, reported extensively on the further deterioration of Indian politics. He apprehended that Gandhi would launch a mass civil disobedience campaign which would render India useless in the war effort. Lampton Berry of the mission staff met Nehru twice on May 24 and 25. Nehru was informed of the American interest in the anticipated Gandhi's campaign. Nehru cabled Johnson after meeting with Gandhi, that popular opinion was behind the 'Quit India' campaign. Gandhi also assumed Nehru that he does not want to embarrass the Americans and he was anxious that American
opinion understand his motives. Nehru did work behind the scenes during June and July to forestall this campaign, as he disagreed with Gandhi, although not openly. On the other hand Gandhi was aware of the fact that his recent statements had been received in America unfavourably. The Americans had also learned in late April of Gandhi’s disenchantment with the Allies in his widely reported denunciation of American troops in India,

"Now we have promise of a never ending stream of soldiers from America and possibly China. I must confess that I do not look upon this event with equanimity. Cannot a limitless number of soldiers be trained out of India’s millions. Would they not make as good fighting material as any in the world? Then, why foreigners? We know what American aid means. It amounts in the end to American influence, if not American role added to British".15

The Americans were bewildered and stunned by such statements. Gandhi thought that the British presence would work as a bait for the Japanese. Their withdrawal would remove the possibilities of a Japanese attack. Gandhi also questioned whether India feels moral sympathy for any of the Allies. In the same issue of May 3 and May 31, 1942, he criticized the United States for entering the war and misusing its resources. Gandhi changed his stance when he was interviewed by a few American journalists in June. But his intention of launching a civil disobedience campaign also became more evident and in return neutralized all the good will achieved by his clarifications. The State
Department appreciated his clarifications. Washington had also considered to send an envoy to meet Gandhi and determine his views on that matter. But this was prior to the June 14 assurance given by Gandhi that the Allies could use India as a military base. However, Alling of the Near Eastern Affairs and Murray of Political Affairs vetoed the project. They feared that any identification of the United States and Gandhi might complicate the situation and alienate other leaders. Alling, was convinced, since April 1, the close association of Johnson with Nehru had invited Gandhi’s anti-American outbursts.

Merrell in New Delhi was also of the opinion that if there was no encouragement from the United States Government, Gandhi would launch the campaign to end the British rule. A message from Nehru to Johnson was cabled by Merrell. In it Nehru had reaffirmed that Gandhi was ready to accept the armed defense of a free India. Johnson in his reply rather warned that Gandhi was being misunderstood in America. Which Nehru acknowledged but still he reiterated that in order to defend itself India had to be freed. This finally led Gandhi to make a direct appeal to Roosevelt. On July 1, Gandhi handed a message to Fischer, who was in New Delhi, to be given to Roosevelt. For this act Gandhi was criticized severely, because why did not he send his message through the American Mission in New Delhi rather than through Fischer. There was a delay in the reception of his message in the United States. Gandhi also authorized
Fischer to pass judgement on his message. He was also relying on Fischer to present his case if he found it reasonable.

He wrote to Fischer:

"If it does not commend itself to you, you may tear it to pieces.... Tell your President I wish to be dissuaded".17

As Fischer was to remain in India for some time, he handed over the letter to an American military officer. Unfortunately for India, any action by Roosevelt was rendered virtually impossible because of the adverse military situation. F.D. Roosevelt was preoccupied with resolving the divergent Russian and British views concerning a second front in Europe, throughout June and July.

The Working Committee at Wardha adopted the "Quit India" resolution on July 14, which demanded British withdrawal. The Congress also formally ordered to let the Allied troops remain. This was done to avoid embarassing the Allies. The resolution was then submitted for consideration and final approval was to be given at Bombay on August 8, at the All India Congress Committee meet. However, the Wardha resolution met with an unfavourable response in America. The demand for withdrawal was emphasized and the offer to support the Allies was minimized. papers which joined in the chorus of critism were: THE NEW YORK TIMES, NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, PHILEDLEPHIA INQUIRER, BALTIMORE SUN, ST. LOUIS GLOBE DEMOCRAT, THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR. Indian leaders were disappointed and surprised by such adverse reactions in the American Press.
Merrell was of the opinion that if America intervened there are chances of a compromise. In a cable of July 14, he held that he had inferred from the Wardha resolution that there is a change in the stance of the Congress, and they would accept any plan which followed the lines taken during the Cropps negotiations. Merrell also concluded, on the basis of two conferences held between Berry and Nehru, that the Indian leaders were willing to accept a promise of independence and the establishment of a provisional national government. Azad also elaborated on such a possibility at a press conference on July 20. Merrell felt encouraged and pressed the State Department to request Roosevelt to issue a guarantee. Roosevelt was also to submit a plan for an interim government which all principle parties would be obliged to accept in advance. This plan was very similar to the "Johnson formula".

Unfortunately Merrell’s plan did not receive much attention in Washington. It was stalled by the Division of Near Eastern Affairs. They questioned its credibility because of its fundamental weaknesses. They were of the view that an American guarantee would violate constitutional procedures and thus would lack legal backing. But as the President Roosevelt had assumed wide executive authority in foreign affairs during the war, a presidential underwriting of Indian independence would likely have been acceptable to
most Americans and probably could have gained the endorsement of a joint resolution of Congress. The American people were also aware of the Indian situation and favoured their demand for independence. This was revealed when public opinion polls were conducted on July 29. The polls showed that 43% favored the proposition that Great Britain should grant complete independence, while only 17% opposed it.\textsuperscript{18}

Roosevelt was hesitant to pressurize Great Britain, although the chances of the U.S. involvement in internal difficulties was slight. Military planning as usual remained high on the priority list of Roosevelt Administration. Hull delivered an address, on July 23, which was transmitted all around the world. His speech reflected an implicit tone of warning to the Indian National Congress. After reviewing the U.N. effort, he elaborated on American support to freedom movement all over the world:

"It has been our policy in the past - and will remain our policy in the future - to use the full measure of our influence to support attainment of freedom by all peoples, who by their acts show themselves worthy of it and ready for it."\textsuperscript{19}

One can infer from Hull's Memoirs that he had India in his mind while delivering this speech. Cripps too broadcast a special message to America on July 27. Cripps denounced Gandhi as a naive visionary who was a threat to the security of India and the U.N. cause.
Roosevelt, however, did act, although reluctantly, as he cared for the sensitiveness of Churchill. On July 25, a message by the Chinese leader, Chiang Kai-Shek brought the Indian problem directly to Roosevelt’s attention. He said that only the American intervention could secure a settlement and he also suggested the substance of the Merrel plan:

Your country is the leader in this war of right against might and Your Excellency’s views have always received serious attention in Britain. Furthermore for a long time the Indian people have been expecting the United States to come out and take a stand on the side of justice and equality.... For the sake of our common victory the United Nations must seek to stabilize the Indian situation and to secure the Indian people’s participation in the joint war effort.... The only way to make them reconsider their course of action is for the United Nations, and especially the United States which they have always admired, to come forth as third parties and offer them sympathy and consolation.... Should however the situation be allowed to drift until an anti-British movement breaks out in India, any attempt on the part of the British to cope with the crisis by enforcing existing colonial laws by resorting to military and police force, will only help to spread disturbances and reactions. On the other hand the wisest course and most enlightened policy for Britain to pursue would be to restore to India her complete freedom and thus to prevent Axis troops from setting foot on Indian soil.... Therefore, I earnestly hope that the United States would advise Britain and India in the name of justice and righteousness to seek a reasonable and satisfactory solution, for this affect vitally the welfare of mankind and has a direct bearing on the good faith and good name of the United Nations. The United States as the acknowledged leader of democracy has a natural and vital role to play in bringing about a successful solution to the problem".20
Roosevelt had to decide whether to side with Britain or to side with China. He was caught unawares between the sharply conflicting views of America's two closest allies. He decided to forward Chiang's message to Churchill, but not to press Chiang's views. Roosevelt also sent one covering cable, in which he had asked Churchill to reply direct to Chiang Kai-Shek. He replied to Gandhi's message, but avoided to respond directly to Gandhi's request. Rather he stressed for the need for Allied harmony and also enclosed a copy of Hull's speech of July 23. Roosevelt also declined to comment on Gandhi's call for the United States to force Britain to withdraw from India, at his press conference on August 4. The unofficial White House advisor Robert Sherwood and Henry F. Grady who had met Gandhi could not prevail upon Roosevelt to make a public statement, guaranteeing post war independence.

Roosevelt by August 7, had full knowledge of the impending disaster. Although his sympathies laid with the nationalists but American security demanded cooperation with the British. Winston Churchill, displayed no intention at acceding to the nationalists' demands. The Doomsday came and "Quit India" resolution was adopted. The appeal called upon the United Nations for support. The appeal was cast in terms of the Allies' military and ideological goals. Indian leaders were still hoping against all odds that the United
States would take action. But the next day all the prominent leaders of the Indian National Congress were arrested thus, dashing all their hopes for a United States action. Roosevelt had in effect closed the door on India. He rejected the idea for intervention and to Chiang's July 25 message he replied on August 8. A cable sent by him through the Philippine leader Manuel Quezon to Nehru and Gandhi, in which he reaffirmed the commitment of America to Asian freedom. He formally acquiesced in the British policy when he informed Churchill about what he has written to Chiang. He expressed agreement with British policy and also said that in order to prevent Chiang from taking a more aggressive stance, his petitions had to be given proper consideration:

I have emphasized the fact that we would of course not wish to pursue any course which undermines the authority of the Government of India at this critical time. I have, however, told him that I would be glad to have him keep in touch with me with regard to this and any other question which affect the vital interests of the United Nations, because of my belief that it is wiser to have him feel that his suggestions sent to me receive friendly considerations.

After the arrests, there was chaos everywhere, Hell broke out, Riots, sabotage, and occasional atrocities made the Britishers remind of 1857. The British Raj faced its sternest challenge since 1857. But the American indifference continued. Again on August 11, Chiang appealed to the
founder of the Atlantic Charter to take steps necessary for 
the solution, but Roosevelt in his reply on August 12, 
disavowed any intention of acting unless he was requested to 
mediate by both the sides. Although Roosevelt showed 
indifference and he did not take any step to resolve the 
issue, but he did doubt the wisdom of Churchill’s policy. In 
cabinet meetings, he usually expressed exasperation over the 
British attitude. On August 12, he again said at a session 
of the Pacific War Council that a solution would be found 
only through trial and error such as the United States had 
experienced in 1780’s. When the Secretary of Interior, 
Harold Ickes asked Roosevelt to guarantee Indian 
independence, the preservation of Anglo-American harmony 
proved the priority consideration. Roosevelt’s reply was:

"You are right about India but it would be playing 
with fire if the British Empire were to tell me to 
mind own business".24

The trend of dissatisfaction with the British 
policy was reinforced in America by the Indian officials. To 
top it, on October 26, Wendell Willkie gave a hard hitting 
speech. He had recently completed a world-wide tour. He 
criticized Roosevelt for not taking any action as far as the 
Indian problem was concerned. Although he had not stopped in 
India, as he did not want to embarass the State Department 
and he also did not want the Indians and the British to
misinterpret him. From Chiang Kai-Shek, Willkie had gathered information over the Indian deadlock. He said:

_We are also punching holes in our reservoir of good will every day by our failure to define clearly our war aims. Besides giving our allies in Asia and Eastern Europe something to fight with, we have to give them assurances of what we are fighting for.... Many of them had read the Atlantic Charter. Rightly or wrongly, they are not satisfied. They ask: What about a Pacific Charter? What about a World Charter?.... Many of them also asked the question which has become almost a symbol all through Asia: What about India? Now I did not go to India and I do not propose to discuss that tangled question tonight. But it has one aspect, in the East, confronted me at every point. The wisest man in China said to me:_

"When the aspirations of India for freedom wore put aside to some future unguaranteed date, it was not Great Britain that suffered in public esteem in the Far East. It was the United States".... He was telling me, and through me, you, that by our silence on India we have already draw heavily on our reservoir of good will in the East. People of the East who would like to count on us are doubtful. The cannot ascertain from our governments wishy-washy attitude toward the problem of India what we are likely to feel at the end of the war about all the other hundreds of millions of Eastern peoples. They cannot tell from our vague and vacillating talk whether we really do stand for freedom, or what we mean by freedom._25

Roosevelt reasserted his interest in India because of the ensuing developments and British intransigence. William Phillips was designated the President's Personal Representative to India in December 1942. This mission rekindled Indian hopes for the United States intervention and just as Johnson did, Phillips too urged Roosevelt to assume a more positive attitude on behalf of the
nationalists. William Phillips was sent in order to gather information and indicate American sympathy for Indian aspiration. He was a career diplomat, one time Under Secretary of State, and a close buddy of Roosevelt. He spent four months in India and when he returned he was convinced that the British were acting in a dangerously misguided fashion. He was of the opinion that except Churchill, most of the members of his cabinet in London want that India should be granted independence. But unfortunately the Englishmen in India were a reactionary lot, blind to the changes taking place in the world around them and were bent upon maintaining British rule indefinitely. Phillips wrote to Roosevelt that:

"There is one fixed idea in the minds of Indians, that Great Britain has no intention of 'Quitting India' and that the post-war period will find the country in the same relative position. In the circumstances, they turn to us to give them help because of our historical stand for liberty".26

A suggestion was made by the Indian leaders that the United States sponsor and preside over an assembly of all Indian groups to discuss the future. Roosevelt was told by Phillips that the idea of American chairmanship was a necessary guarantee to independence as "British promises in this regard are no longer believed".27 Phillips traveled widely and met Indians of all points of view, although most Congress leaders were in the goals at this time. Before leaving India, Phillips asked to see Gandhi, but he was not
granted permission. His two letters of March 3 and May 14, 1942 to Roosevelt indicate his conviction that the United States should push actively for a settlement. He strongly felt that the Indian parties should receive a substantial amount of power and a specific promise of post war independence.

In the letter of March 3, 1943, Phillips made the following suggestions:

With approval and blessing of the British Government, an invitation could be addressed to the leaders of all Indian political groups, on behalf of the President of the United States, to meet together to discuss plans for the future. The assembly could be presided over by an American who could exercise influence in harmonizing the endless divisions of caste, religion, race, and political views. The conference might well be under the patronage of the King Emperor, the President of the United States, the President of the Soviet Union, and Chinag Kai-Shek, in order to bring pressure to bear on Indian politicians. Upon the issuance of the invitations, the King Emperor could give a fresh assurance of the intention of the British Government, to transfer power to India upon a certain date as well as his desire to grant a provisional set up for the duration. The conference could be held in any city in India except Delhi. American chairmanship would have the advantage, not only of expressing the interest of America in the future independence of India, but would also be a guarantee to the Indians of the British offer of independence.

In his second letter, on May 14, 1943, Phillips declared:

Even though the British should fail again, it is high time that they should make an effort to improve conditions and re-establish confidence among the Indian people that their future independence is to be granted. Words are of no avail. They only aggravate the present situation.
It is time for the British to act. This they can do by a solemn declaration from the King Emperor that India will achieve her independence at a specific date after the war, and, as a guarantee of good faith in this respect, a provisional representative coalition government will be re-established at the center and limited powers transferred to it.

I feel strongly, Mr. President, that in view of our military position in India, we should have a voice in these matters. It is not right for the British to say this is none of our business when we alone presumably will have the major part to play in the struggle with Japan. If we do nothing and merely accept the British point of view that conditions in India are none of our business, then we must be prepared for various serious consequences in the internal situation in India which may develop as a result of the despair and misery and anti-white sentiments of hundreds of millions of subject people.

In his letter of March 3, Phillips was saying that certain action of the United States have encouraged Indian expectations. He remarked, that the Indians "are caught in the new idea which is sweeping over the world, of freedom for oppressed peoples. The Atlantic Charter has given the movement great impetus. Your (Roosevelt's) speeches have given encouragement". He also emphasized on the racial aspects of the situation by saying, that if this stalemate is allowed to continue, it might "affect our conduct of the war in this part of the world and our future relations with colored races".

Phillips again commented in his letter of May 14:

"The British Prime Minister... has stated that the provisions of the Atlantic Charter are not applicable to India, and it is not unnatural therefore that Indian leaders are beginning to wonder whether the Charter is only for the benefits of white races".

33
Gandhi on December 31, 1942, from the places of Aga Khan near Poona where he had been imprisoned since August had threatened a fast to protest against the prolonged incarceration of the Congress leaders. The Viceroy on the other hand blamed Gandhi for the deadlock and asked him to renounce the "Quit India" resolution. On February 10, 1943, Gandhi commenced the fast. After returning to Delhi on the eve of the fast, Phillips requested Lord Linlithgow to grant him permission to meet Gandhi. He, however, declined, as all the government officials were not allowed to meet Gandhi during the fast.

Pressures started mounting on Phillips to intercede, during the first seven days of the fast. He kept silent and his silence was severely criticized in the Indian press. Gandhi’s life was in danger as his health deteriorated. The government was flooded with requests to free him. Phillips on learning about the possibility of his death from reliable sources, cabled the State Department, requesting permission to express to the Viceroy Linlithgow American concern. On February 16, Hull asked Halifax to change stance, but he declined. So the State Department authorized Phillips to intercede. On February 18, Phillips again tried his luck, by requesting the Viceroy for permission. But of no avail. The next day Rajagopalachari too warned Phillips of the urgency to clarify the American position.
Phillips was convinced that by not changing their stance the British are inviting a revolution. So he urged that through Halifax Britain should be pressurized. Unfortunately the United States again towed behind Britain, despite the imminent death of Gandhi and all the ramifications. Halifax on February 20, warned Hull that serious problems will crop up should Phillips make any statement regarding Gandhi's fast. However, Phillips made a statement that the Indian crisis are being discussed by the United States with Britain. Churchill got very upset and he warned the United States to keep its paws away and not to interfere. Roosevelt assured that the United States would not intervene. Rather the State Department started contemplating on the statement which would be issued if Gandhi dies. Roosevelt was bombarded with requests from groups and many Americans -- including PEARL BUCK, E. STANLEY JONES, HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK, JOHN HAYNES HOLMES, RICHARD WASH and REINHOLD NEIBUHR -- sent petitions to the White House. Phillips wanted to mediate but could not. However, Gandhi's fast ended on March 2, 1943.

Phillips on March 3 proposed a bold move to Roosevelt. According to which, with the approval of Britain, Roosevelt would call a conference in which all the Indian groups were to be invited. It would be headed by an American and possibly include representatives from the Soviet Union and China. Great Britain would give assurances of its
willingness to transfer power at a certain date and to cooperate in a provisional government. Unfortunately Roosevelt did not respond. He found his letter "amazingly radical for a man like Bill". After much delay on April 14, Hull sent a message to Phillips. He was asked to make a request on purely personal basis as the State Department backing would be inappropriate.

On April 11, one very serious incident happened, which added to the problems of Phillips. A Harvard professor Ralph Barton Perry had written to Welles a few days earlier that the State Department should explain its stand in several areas, including India. Welles responded openly by affirming the interest and willingness of the United States to help in solving the Indian mess, but he denied any intervention on the part of the United States. To add to his troubles, the dispatch was censored as it was sent by THE Reuters. It omitted the reference to the governments willingness to assist.

Before leaving for India, on February 15, he gave a farewell cocktail party to the press on April 25. He made a statement which placed the responsibility for the short comings of his mission on the British:

"I should like to have met and talked with Gandhi and Nehru. I asked permission and was told by the proper authorities that they were unable to grant the necessary facilities".
On the return to the United States Phillips met Roosevelt and after that wrote his recommendations to the President:

Assuming that India is bound to be an important base for our future operations against Burma and Japan, it would seem to me of highest importance that we should have around us a sympathetic India rather than an indifferent and possible a hostile one.... While India is broken politically into various parties and groups, all have one object in common, eventual freedom and independence from British domination.... Words are of no avail. They only aggravate the situation. It is time for the British to act.... I feel strongly, Mr. President, that in view of our military position in India we should have a voice in these matters. It is not right for the British to say "this is none of our business" when we alone presumably will have the major part to play in the future struggle with Japan. If we do nothing and merely accept the British Point of view that conditions in India are none of our business then we must be prepared for various serious consequences in the internal situation in India which may develop as a result of despair and misery and anti-white sentiments of hundreds of millions of subject peoples.31

Roosevelt was impressed by what Phillips told him, but he did not want to risk another typical Churchillian outburst by mentioning India again, which was like 'a red rag to a bull'. Although he did say during a press conference on May 14, that Phillips would return to India.32 But he never returned to India, although technically he remained the "personal representative" to India of the President till March 17, 1945.

Roosevelt asked Phillips to meet Churchill personally, which he did on May 23, at the British Embassy. He urged Churchill to bring the Moslems and the Hindus of
India together as the time was ripe. But Churchill prophesized a blood bath in India. So Phillips decided it was hopeless to discuss, which Roosevelt agreed. Roosevelt had ceased to appeal directly to the British on India and turned momentarily to Russia for support in his anti-imperial crusade. Till the end of the European war in May 1945, the United States maintained a more distant role in Indian developments. This shift in the American stance was because of Churchill's intransigence. America had realized that to assist India was beyond their capability.

At Teheran in November, 1943 Roosevelt had talks with Stalin and they both agreed of ending imperialism in Asia. The crux of talks, as recorded in the minutes, was:

The President... felt it would be better not to discuss the question of India with Mr. Churchill, since the latter had no solution of that question, and merely proposed to defer the entire question, to the end of the war.

Marshall Stalin agreed that this was a sore spot with the British.

The President said at some future date, he would like to talk with Marshal Stalin on the question of India; that he felt that the best solution would be to reform from the bottom, somewhat on the Soviet line. Marshal Stalin replied that the Indian question was a complicated one, with different levels of culture and the absence of relationship in the castes. He added that reform from the bottom would mean revolution.

Having made such careless remarks, which were not based on understanding, rather on intuition. Roosevelt never
found another occasion to discuss the Indian problem with Stalin. Then on Roosevelt rather sought to connect the question of Indian problem and all Asia colonialism with his campaign to make China a great power.

The Roosevelt administration in late 1943 reviewed and reorganized some of its policies. It was deemed necessary because two major events happened which stirred India politically. First, was the appointment of Lord Wavell as the new Viceroy of India and second was the unconditional release of Gandhi. Again official action was asked for by the pro-nationalists in America. They were of the opinion that some of the Indian disillusionment could be removed by such an action. Throughout late 1943 and early 1944, nationalist groups and their supporters in America became very vocal and started pressurizing again for action.

Suddenly there was a bolt from the blue when Pearson published excerpts on July 25. The excerpts were from the Phillips-Roosevelt communique of May 14, 1943, in which Roosevelt was urged by Phillips that he should make use of his influence to secure promises from Britain for an announcement of a definite date for postwar independence and the establishment of an interim representative coalition government.

Much brouhaha was raised, as to who passed on this information. Roosevelt suspected Welles, who had resigned as Under Secretary in the fall of 1943 under pressure from
Hull. The British responded immediately and Sir Ronald Campbell, the British Minister in Washington, gained assurances from Berle, that the communique was not leaked by the State Department and it regretted Pearson’s action. Before the dust could settle down, Pearson on August 28 reported that Phillips had been declared ‘persona non grata’. A message was quoted from Eden to Campbell. In that message the Foreign Secretary had commented that India was worth a thousand Phillipses, and to top it Pearson gave an accurate account of Campbell’s presentations of July 25 to Berle. Roosevelt’s commitment to Indian freedom was doubted as at the Quebec discussions, India was ignored. From 1943 through 1945, Roosevelt did not demonstrate a direct and personal interest in India. Because of this, in the Indian eyes the standing of the America plummeted. The story of American interest in the independence for India during the Second World War thus remains a tragedy of high intentions self-defeated.33

When Harry S. Truman took over the reins of the United States after the sudden death of Roosevelt on April 12, 1945, the United States approach to India became more systematic and less personal. Truman never conveyed the sort of personal interest in India that his predecessor had managed to embody. He preferred to concentrate on the problems of Europe and East Asia and left the affairs of South Asia to his subordinates. This is evident from the fact that Truman’s memoirs referred to India only in respect
of its food problem. However, the Truman Administration could not withdraw from Roosevelt’s legacy and was confronted with the problem of Lend-Lease settlement and the problem of Indian Independence and partition.

In February 1942, Great Britain had signed the Lend-Lease agreement. According to which, "Great quantities of war materials were shipped to India by the United States for the use of the British and Indian military forces and also for bolstering the civilian economy". Reciprocal aid was extended to America by Indian Government by liberalsupplying large amounts of stores to American forces in India and by shipping raw materials to the United States needed for war production in that country.

"The biggest item in the Lend-Lease exports to India was munitions valued at $ 1,288,498,000. The remainder was accounted for by petroleum products, $161,721,000 industrial materials and products $494,673,000 and agricultural products, $103,911,000".

British troopers stationed in India were to use most of the material lend-leased to India. To India it was of no direct value. By a special Lend-Lease agreement of June, 1944, the United States agreed to supply India with 226 million ounces of silver ostensibly "to maintain an adequate supply of coinage for the large numbers of United Nations forces there and for India’s expended war production, and to help to keep prices stable in this important United Nations supply base and War Theatre".

Indian was to return this silver back to the United States on an ounce-for-ounce basis after the termination of the war.
For the United States Lend-Lease aid was said to have become a major source of leverage. The United States managed to gain certain amount of control over the India economy, although Great Britain had signed the agreement out of necessity and due to her utter dependence on American support. Because of this the United States benefited substantially from reverse Lend-Lease aid supplied by India. It received "aviation gasoline, motor gasoline and lubricating oil, and lesser amounts of other petroleum products from the Indian Government for use by American forces". In addition, United States army personnel were given "postal, telegraph, and telephone facilities, water and electric power, furnishings for buildings, and items of clothing including mosquito and gas proof outfits". Large quantities of rubber, tin, mica, manganese and other raw materials were also provided by India.

The State Department in May 1945, decided to drastically cut Lend-Lease to Great Britain. The evacuation of the U.S. Army from India began with the defeat of Japan. A "final settlement with India for Lend-Lease, reciprocal aid and surplus war property located in India, and for financial claims of each governments against the other arising as a result of the World War II" was signed in May 1946.

Since equal benefits had accrued to both nations from this interchange of mutual aid, which aggregated over a
billion dollars in value,\(^\text{41}\) it was agreed by India and the United States that no payment would be made by either government for Lend-Lease and reciprocal aid items provided by one another. "All obligations arising out of Lend-Lease were balanced against each other and cancelled".\(^\text{42}\) However, the settlement did not alter the obligation of the Indian Government to return to the United States the 226 million ounces of silver transferred under Lend-Lease. India owed the United States $178.4 million as on March 31, 1949 as a result of the settlement.\(^\text{43}\) As it was the first formal agreement to be signed between these two countries, the Indo-U.S. settlement of 1946 May was a significant one. Despite initial complications, it was hoped that its harmonious conclusion would be an auspicious beginning for further friendly relations between India and the United States. Both the contracting parties wanted this agreement to act as "a prelude to increasingly cooperative and cordial peacetime relations between the United States and India".\(^\text{44}\)

It may be added the agreement provided that India shall dispose off American surplus property in India until such time as the Indian Government determines that further disposal cannot be made on profitable basis or July 1, 1948, whichever is earlier. The United States Government was entitled to receive one half of the proceeds in excess of
$50,000,000 upon rendition of the final report. The U.S. share was to be used as follows:

1. Acquiring title to real property and improvements to real property in India;
2. For carrying out cultural programmes, establishment of a rupee fund; and
3. In defraying U.S. Governmental expenses in India, any remaining balance to be used.

As narrated above America's concern for a trouble free India-Burma-China Theatre as a part of the Allied war effort during the Second World War had made the Roosevelt Administration take interest in the cause of India's independence. And, while the outcome was hardly encouraging, the Truman Administration could, nevertheless, not withdraw from the position of indirect involvement initiated by President Roosevelt. As a result, Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, India's Agent General at Washington, correctly assessed the American mood when he testified that the war had made the United States "India-conscious".

There was a dramatic change in the British-Indian scene after the war. Moving speedily to grant the promised independence to India, the Labour Government sent the Cabinet Mission. The American interest in India's independence was reaffirmed during the Mission's deliberations and the Congress-League impasse over the
question of Pakistan. That the United States was willing to offer assistance in resolving the deadlock was reported in the Indian Press. It was also reported that the State Department favoured international arbitration on Pakistan. George Merrell, the American Commissioner in New Delhi, cautioned that no useful purpose would be served if the United States were to intervene at its own initiative at this juncture. The Cabinet Mission Plan was appreciated "as a constructive and statesman like step to solve the India problem", by Dean Acheson. On behalf of the State Department Acheson welcomed the composition of the Interim Executive Council by saying:

The Department has of course, followed with great interest, the negotiations which have been going on for a political settlement in India and welcomes the announcement that a representative Council composed entirely of Indians will take office.... The composition of the new council makes it clear that members are entitled to speak on behalf of a great majority of the Indian people. They have the best wishes of the United States in their effort to effect a peaceful transition to complete freedom. It is regrettable that Moslem League has not decided to participate; but it is hoped that it may later find it possible to do so.

The American Press, when the League did join the Interim Government, hailed the step as "a political truce which may lead to important political developments". The United States immediately accorded recognition to the Interim Government by elevating the status of the Indian Mission at Washington on a reciprocal basis. Since early 1946 the
negotiations for such an elevation had been in progress. Owing to the State Department’s reluctance, had not fructified. The reason being that it would have amounted to a public announcement that the United States considered India a self-governing, in effective control of its external relations. Acheson was of the opinion that a representative Interim Viceregal Council at Delhi would constitute a far more appropriate occasion for such a change in the form of diplomatic representation and would reflect American approval of India’s advance towards self-government. Accordingly, a State Department release dated October 23, 1946 announced:

"The Honourable George R. Merrell, at present American Commissioner to India with the personal rank of Minister, will act as Charge d’Affaires ad interim of American Embassy pending designation and arrival in India of an American Ambassador".51

However, because the interpretation of paragraph 19(5) relating to the meeting in sections became a subject of dispute,52 the League did not join the Constituent Assembly. The League contended that in inter-provincial groups, decisions should be made by a simple majority. The Congress opposed League’s proposal. The British Government to break the deadlock invited the Indian leaders to London to resolve the crisis. Considerable American interest was aroused by the London Conference, December 3-6, 1946. Worried over the communal wrangle, the State Department
believed that a halt in the constitutional progress, which might cause widespread chaos in India similar to that in China, could have world wide repercussions. The Embassy in London was instructed by Acheson to cable the progress of negotiations using both British and Indian sources, and to informally impress upon Nehru and Jinnah the desirability of a successful conclusion to the talks. The Embassy was advised to draw the attention of the two leaders to the sympathetic interest that Americans had long taken in India’s freedom, and to assure them that the United States looked forward to a stable, peaceful, and United India in which all elements of its population, including the Muslims, would have ample scope to realize their legitimate aspirations. Acheson added for the Embassy’s confidential information that it would be wise for the Congress Party to accept the League’s interpretation pertaining to a compulsory grouping of the provinces of Northwest and Northeast India by a majority vote of the appropriate representatives of the Constituent Assembly, though this might lead to the downfall of the then ruling Congress governments in Assam and the North-Western Frontier Province. The League could have been brought round to a position of loyal cooperation within the framework of the Indian Union, if the Congress had given concessions.

Acheson was informed by the American Charge d’Affaires in London that it was uncertain as to what extent
information about talks would be obtainable, because the India office believed, that the decision about giving the information to the American Embassy would have to be taken by Attlee, who might decide that it would be more appropriate for Ernest Bevin, British Foreign Secretary, to advise the State Department. Further, it was also unlikely that the brief stay of Indian leaders in London would provide an opportunity for informal talks. The existing tension might, moreover, cause Nehru and Jinnah to interpret whatever was said to them as interference by the United States. Therefore, it would be better to issue a statement on India from Washington, Acheson so issued the following statement on December 3, 1946:

The United States awaits with deep concern the outcome of the current talks in London between the Indian political leaders and the British Government. I feel most strongly that it will be in the interest of India, as well as that of the world, for its leaders to grasp this opportunity to establish a stable and peaceful India.

The crux of the internal problem now confronting India appears to arise from difference of opinion between the two principal parties as to the conditions under which provinces can elect to join or remain out of sub-federations in northwest and northeast India. I am confident that if the Indian leaders show the magnanimous spirit the occasion demands, they can go forward together on the basis of the clear provision on this point, contained in the constitutional plan proposed by the British Cabinet last spring to forge an Indian federal Union in which all elements of the population have ample scope to achieve their legitimate political and economic aspiration.
The United States has long taken a sympathetic interest in the progressive realisation of India’s political destiny. It has welcomed the forward looking spirit behind the comprehensive programs of industrial and agricultural advancement recently formulated in that country. Lastly, by our recent establishment of full diplomatic relations with the interim government of India, we have expressed in tangible form our confidence in the ability of Indian leaders to make the vital decisions that lie immediately ahead with full awareness that their actions at this moment in history may directly affect world peace and prosperity for generations to come.53

However, this long statement had little effect. With neither side budging an inch, at the London Conference the Indian leaders reiterated their respective stands. On the question of grouping the League was supported by the British. The British Government announced on December 6, 1946, that if the Constituent Assembly drafted a constitution in which a large section of the Indian population had not been represented, His Majesty’s Government would not even contemplate forcing it on anyone or any unwilling part of the country. Dean Acheson, however, felicitated the Provisional Chairman of the Constituent Assembly on December 9.

The British Government urged the United States to informally influence Congress leaders, particularly Nehru, after the failure of the London talks, to accept the British and the League’s interpretation. Meanwhile, Patel told Merrell that the United States was unduly influenced by the British. To which Rajagopalachari added that if it continued
to make concessions as suggested by Acheson, then the Congress might be reduced to a minority.\textsuperscript{55} Merrell was directed to clarify the American stance with Nehru as the State Department was averse to such an impression. Merrell, in his meeting with Nehru, stressed that recent expressions of American interest in the amicable resolution of the political impasse were solely on its own initiative and stemmed from America's belief that the establishment of the Indian Federal Union would be a great step forward towards world stability and prosperity. As politically disinterested outsiders with considerable experience in federalism, the U.S. Government felt that American views might be given a sympathetic consideration, and that though the British Cabinet Plan was open to honest criticism, it, represented a fair basis for constitution making. The Congress concession to the League on the disputed clause should be a reciprocal one involving an undertaking by the League to work loyally within the framework of the Indian Federal Union.

Merrell was told by Nehru in his reply that he and his colleagues did not think that public and private expressions of American interest were at the instance of the British. Nehru said that he was convinced, that American opinions were expressed spontaneously in the interest of India and the World. The Congress too realized the necessity of launching the Union with a weak government at Centre.
Although the Congress had not liked the Plan, but in the interest of a fair and peaceful settlement they had formed the Interim Government on the understanding that the League would cooperate with it. On the other hand the real motive behind the League’s association with the Constituent Assembly was to fight the Congress and wreck it. When the London talks were called, Nehru believed that the League was about to associate itself with the Constituent Assembly and that it was the British who had thrown a spanner into the works by announcing that the constitution would not be forced upon any unwilling part of the country. For the League to join the Assembly therefore, there was little incentive. The Congress believed, nevertheless, that the League would in the end join, as it had joined the Interim Government. To find out what Jinnah wanted, at various stages the Congress had endeavoured but had never received any satisfactory response. Even "PAKISTAN" had not been adequately defined. As prominent Leaguers, being landlords, preferred antiquated land laws to continue, the Congress was convinced that whereas Jinnah might want some change, he did not want a democratic government. The Congress might follow the British suggestion, however, of submitting the question of voting in sections to the Federal Court and the Court might find it difficult to give a fair decision. It would not be accepted if the decision was unfair to the League and the British.56

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Nehru's reaction was appreciated by the State Department. The U.S. Mission in New Delhi was directed by it to contact the League leaders and to emphasize to them that the Congress attitude would not alter unless the League declares publicly its willingness and intentions to cooperate loyally within the framework of the Indian Federal Union. In London, Waldermar J. Gallman, American Charge d'Affaires, talked with Jinnah. The sympathetic interest shown in the matter by the United States through Acheson's statement, was appreciated by him. Jinnah further remarked that the Congress-League tussle was very intricate. Although some understanding was shown by the U.S. officials, the American people were ignorant about the issues. No indication was given by him that within a reasonable time the impasse could be resolved. According to Gallman, Jinnah did not seem much disturbed about the bleak prospects for an amicable settlement of the dispute.

Twice, Thomas E. Weil, second Secretary at Delhi, met Liaquat Ali. He stressed the view that the chances of the Congress accepting the December 6 statement would improve if the League was willing to cooperate within the framework of the Indian Federal Union. Liaquat Ali seemed unwilling, during these meetings to recognize the merit of the League's voluntary assurance of cooperation as he was so bitterly against the Congress. He explained that the League
had already made sacrifices in accepting the Cabinet Plan. He went on to say that he could not comprehend why Jinnah should give any assurance, that the Congress, with its brute majority, was not justified in entertaining fears, rather it was the League which had a cause to fear. Liaquat Ali asserted to Weil, that if assurances concerning the treatment of minorities were to be given, they should come from the Congress in regard to Muslims in Hindu majority provincial groups. He insisted that the League’s waiting for the Congress decision on the December 6 statement was itself evidence of the League’s sincerity of purpose. Liaquat Ali repeated the League’s allegation that the Congress was determined to establish a Hindu Raj. Because the Congress interpretation was contrary to that of the Cabinet Mission, the British should never have regarded the Congress acceptance as genuine, he argued. Moreover, without the League’s participation they should not have permitted the Congress to form the Interim Government. Liaquat Ali further disclosed that he had told the British in London that if they intended to withdraw from India within two or three years, whether conditions at that time were peaceful or not, they should immediately withdraw, as after two or three years the Hindus would have most of the administration under their control. Weil inferred from these remarks that he was not convinced that the British would withdraw from India regardless of the prevailing conditions and would indefinitely keep hoping for a peaceful transfer of power.
Weil reiterated that the Congress fears about "groupings" were a political hurdle to the acceptance of the December 6 statement. There seemed to be considerable doubt on this score on account of Jinnah's recent reference to Pakistan, regardless of the Congress accusation that the League intended to sabotage the Cabinet Plan. Weil thought that a League promise of cooperation and a Congress acceptance of the December 6 statement might lead to a resolution of the impasse. Liaquat Ali observed, when Weil requested him to convey the U.S. Government's view to Jinnah, that Jinnah unless the Congress first accepted the December 6 statement would not be receptive to the idea and could not be persuaded to offer assurances. Jinnah had pressurized the members of the Council even at the time of accepting the Cabinet Plan. If Jinnah appeared to them to prejudice the issue, he might be faced with a rebellious Council, as now the situation was more difficult. Therefore, Ali felt that it would be better to allow time to let off the steam. Liaquat Ali confided that Jinnah had already told Attlee that he could make no commitment. He would call a meeting of the Council, if the Congress accepted the December 6 statement.57

Weil was not convinced by Liaquat Ali's logic. In his report to the U.S. Government he felt that a statesman like assurance from Jinnah, even at the risk of a loss of

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prestige among his followers, might pressurize the Congress into accepting the December 6 statement. It seemed too much to hope for statesman like behaviour from the leaders involved as both the sides had been taking such sharply, partisan attitudes. If the Congress leaders had been advised by Gandhi to turn down the December 6 statement, it would be difficult to believe that he was more interested in preventing suffering among his people than in preserving the power of the Congress. Weil finally felt that if, Jinnah had to be contacted, as he was in Bombay, it should be through the Bombay Consulate. Because Liaquat Ali did not have regular channels of secret communication with Jinnah, messages transmitted through him invited the risk of a leak.58

The State Department authorized Merrell to covey the American Government’s views to Jinnah through the Bombay Consulate, because it sensed Liaquat Ali’s reluctance, in endorsing the assessment of the Mission. The Congress had already passed a resolution on January 1, 1947, conditionally, accepting the December 6 statement, Jinnah observed, when Sparks discussed with him the desirability of assuring the Congress of its cooperation, that if the Congress made genuine efforts to accommodate itself to the British and the League interpretation, at once the League would join, but the Congress resolution could not be defined to encompass such an effort. He further said that the
resolution was a statement of contradictions and accepted nothing. Jinnah welcomed American official views and concurred with them. He told Sparks,

"Tell your government, we work towards the same ends but for God's sake do not be chloroformed by meaningless Congress propaganda gesture. Congress had only to say that we expect nothing more; that would have shown (their) true faithful intent and League would have responded in the same coin."  

The Congress for its rigid attitude was criticized by the Muslim League Working Committee. It further declared that it had destroyed the Cabinet Plan as well as any possibility of a compromise. The Congress' reaction was no less indignant. Resignation of the League members from the Interim Government was demanded, failing which the Viceroy was requested to dismiss them. The U.S. Secretary of State, now George C. Marshall, alarmed at these portents, asked Merrell to explore British thinking regarding the next step, and specifically to try to find out whether the British Government was disposed to instruct the Viceroy to dismiss the League Ministers, or to alter the Cabinet Plan to meet the problem of the League's absence from the Constituent Assembly. Ian Scott, Private Secretary to the Viceroy, was contacted by Merrell, and was informed that no instructions had been received and that there was no certainty that the League Ministers would be sacked immediately. To enable the Viceroy to tell the League that the Congress had
unconditionally accepted the December 6 statement, the best course seemed to be was to persuade the Congress to amend its January 5, 1947, resolution. Merrell reported that the trouble making potentialities of the League were such that the British Government would avoid advising the Viceroy to sack their ministers. Although it was doubtful whether Nehru could obtain support for such an amendment, the course suggested by Scott was worth trying.

Lord Inverchapel, British Ambassador in Washington, called upon Marshall to deliver an advance text of the announcement, to be made by Attlee on February 20, 1947. He was also to hand a secret memorandum analysing the Indian Political Landscape and explaining the British decision to transfer power not later than 1948, and to prefer partition only as a last resort, if no agreement was possible between the contending parties. The British gesture was appreciated and Inverchapel was assured by Marshall that the U.S. Government was thoroughly convinced of the British sincerity to solve the Indian problem. Marshall issued a statement three days later, hoping that Indian leadership would accept the challenge of the British Plan.60

The Cabinet Plan was virtually abandoned and the inevitability of partition conceded, after the British announcement of February 20. The Muslim League made the most of it. It engineered communal riots and resorted to civil
disobedience, to force the Congress as well as the British. To Gandhi's "vivisect me before you vivisect India", Jinnah resorted "we shall either have a divided India or a destroyed India". The reaction of both parties to the British announcement was reported to the State Department by the American officials. On March 5, 1947, Consul-General John J. Macdonald and Vice-Consul J. Jefferson Jones III called on Jinnah. During the conversations Jinnah reiterated his demand for Pakistan. From his emphatic demand, American officials concluded that the attitude of the League would be no more conciliatory.61

American officials were told by Jinnah on another occasion that the Congress demand for a partition of Bengal and Panjab would not frighten him into joining the Indian Union. He further added that to prevent Hindu imperialism from spreading into the Middle East, the establishment of Pakistan was necessary. For assistance, Muslim countries would stand together and look to the United States. The U.S. officials were reminded of the frequent jibes in THE DAWN against American economic imperialism and dollar diplomacy. Jinnah said that the newspaper reflected the mood of the Indian Muslims, who viewed Americans as anti-Muslims and that U.S. support to Jews against Arabs in Palestine added to Muslim opposition. The American envoy found it difficult to believe, although Jinnah expressed the hope that a British announcement on Pakistan would clear the atmosphere.
and reduce communal tension, and felt that force would have to be used to control rebellion in Bengal and Panjab, no matter who received the power from the British.

Merrell reported after going through all the things that so far as the acceptance of the Cabinet Plan was concerned, the League’s position -- that the Congress had never agreed unconditionally to the Plan as interpreted by the British -- was logical. The Congress leaders had not only failed to show the magnanimity but had demonstrated remarkable ineptitude as politicians. The League’s civil disobedience campaign might never have materialized, had the Congress agreed to the British clarification about the grouping clause. As it happened, the League’s provincial organisations had quite strongly encouraged Jinnah in his demand for Pakistan. Most Congressmen appeared to have reconciled themselves to the prospect of the League staying out of the Constituent Assembly and felt that some sort of a Muslim nation was in the making. According to Merrell the Congress leaders in effect had abandoned the tenets of their campaign for a United India because of making it as unattractive as possible by demanding the partition of Bengal and Panjab. Both the parties were to be blamed for this intransigence. Merrell inferred in his report to the State Department that had the Congress put aside its fears about the effect of the Cabinet Plan on their position in Assam, Panjab, and the North Western Frontier Province, Jinnah would not have had a logical basis for the current
impasse. Instead of facing the prospect of partition India would then have been laying the groundwork for a United India.\textsuperscript{62}

The United States was informed about the partition announcement which was to be made on June 3, 1947. The British officials explained, as only the United States had closely followed the Indian situation and expressed its interest in it through helpful statements. The U.S. Government sensed the inevitability of partition\textsuperscript{63} after the advance briefing from London, although the United States with its Civil War heritage was averse to partition and the policymakers in the State Department also believed that their country’s interests would be best served by the continued integrity of India. After this, the Truman Administration gave up its mediatory efforts, lest it should be misunderstood to be taking sides. The State Department welcomed the partition agreement and expressed hope for early cessation of civil disorder, since a meeting of minds had taken place between the Congress and the League. The State Department declared further the "spirit of cooperation" evinced by the Indian leaders augurs well and, if continued, might provide an example to all nations of the world.\textsuperscript{64} President Harry S. Truman extended identical greetings to both countries on their respective independence days, and assured them that the United States would remain a "constant friend".\textsuperscript{65}
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