CHAPTER VI

PHILLIPS MISSION: BRITISH INTRASIGENCE AND INDIAN STAEMATE

The Indian situation was grim. While Gandhi and his comrades were in jail, the passive resistance movement continued and hampered war effort. At this juncture, United States Government decided to send to India, one of its most competent diplomats, former Under Secretary of State and American Ambassador to Italy, William Phillips as President Roosevelt's Personal Representative to India. In London the appointment of President Roosevelt's personal representative was considered natural, in view of the great strategic importance of India, the American forces there and the great interest displayed by the American public regarding Indian question.¹ The British Government though not particularly happy with the President's choice of William Phillips as his Personal Representative, thought it wiser not to attempt a rejection as they might be landed with some one much less suitable.²

¹The Tribune, December 14, 1942, p.1.
British Government though wary of American participation in India's affairs, felt that the risk would be considerably less and the object achieved, if the Viceroy had residing in Delhi close to him a really high calibre American, through whom they could have confidence of the American people. The British felt that it was important that Americans and the President, should be guided on the proper channel on the question of India. The results could be obtained if the tale was told to the President and to Americans by an American.³

The British press, gave a favourable opinion on William Phillips. The diplomatic correspondent of 'Sunday Observer' pointed out that "American public opinion has always been interested in the Indian question but the opinion owes more to emotion, stimulated by ignorance, than knowledge and understanding. The creation of informed American public opinion, on British Empire, is essential for our future happiness and Phillips Mission is the first important step in this direction".⁴

⁴Reported in the Tribune, December 15, 1942, p.5.
commented, "He is not here to express opinion either on
his own behalf, or on behalf of his Government about
Indian politics or any other aspect of the Indian scene,
and it is extremely naive, to expect him to step out of
the limits of his role ... Those who wish for a closer
understanding between India and the United States of
America, will serve their cause most usefully, by taking
it for granted that Mr. Phillips knows better than anyone
else how to do work entrusted to him by the President".7
The Amrita Bazar Patrika, a nationalist paper published
from Calcutta, expressed doubts about the success of
Phillips venture in new diplomacy, because of the failure
of Louis Johnson at the time of Cripps Mission. The
Hindustan Times edited by Devdas Gandhi extended a warm
welcome to Phillips, on behalf of the People of India.
The Dawn, mouth piece of the Muslim League expected that
Phillips would avoid any hint of intervention into the
Indian problem. The Muslim leader Mohammed Ali Jinnah
feared, that American pressure, might be unfavourable to the
demand of Pakistan.8

7The Times of India, Bombay, March 11, 1943, p.5.
8Habibuddin, Syed M., "William Phillips Mission to India:
A Forgotten Episode in Indo-American Relations", American
In United States, William Phillips appointment as President Roosevelt's Personal Envoy to India, was welcomed while the President's statement that Phillips did not carry in his pocket a formula for the solution of India's difficulties, was criticized in certain quarters. The newspapers expressed the feeling, that Phillips presence, might well be a help toward easing the situation. The possibility of America mediating at some future date was expressed by Washington Post. "Our chief need from India at the present moment is objective information which Phillips will furnish ... some day of course the administration may use Mr. Phillip's observation as equipment for preferring a mediation role in India."  

In India, Phillips Mission met with a mixed response. An Indian newspaper remarked, 'Although this is Mr. Phillips first visit in this country, he has been interested for a long time past in India and her problems, but regarding the latter, he comes as he has stated himself with an open mind." While Times of India in its editorial 

5Reported in The Times of India, Bombay, December 17, 1942, p.5.
6The Tribune, January 8, 1942, p.1.
William Phillips on reaching India, made it clear that he came with no formulas from the President. "My duty will be to know as well as I can and report to the President. I also have the task of coordinating the various American civilian activities in different parts of India, bringing them all to Delhi."\textsuperscript{9}

Since the prominent Congress leaders were in jail, the Congress viewpoint was placed before William Phillips by Lala Dunichand of Ambala.\textsuperscript{10} G.D.Birla, a foremost industrialist and supporter of the Congress, in an interview with Phillips, emphasized that mutual distrust was the main stumbling block to settlement between Britain and India. "If Britain sincerely intended to grant freedom to India after the war, what they inquired was the objection to a transfer of civil power, to a provisional government, as a proof of that intention. The impression which was widespread, among the Indians according to Phillips was that the British Government was determined to preserve the status quo, in spite of the promises given with regard to post-war independence and

\textsuperscript{9}The Times of India, Bombay, January 11, 1943, p.6.
\textsuperscript{10}The Statesman, February 6, 1943, p.1.
general assurances, contained in the Atlantic Charter."

The Executive Committee of the Nationalist Christian Party addressed a memorandum to William Phillips, "Knowing it to be your desire to become acquainted with all sections of public opinion in this country and especially in view of the tendency in certain quarters, to exaggerate the minorities question, we would like to place the following facts. The Indian Christian Community is next to the Muslims, the largest minority community in India. This community has both through the public utterances of its accredited leaders, as well as through resolutions passed at various representative conferences, and public meetings always declared itself to be fully in sympathy with the National aspirations of our countrymen and has been supporting the national demand for complete self government without asking for any special safeguards for itself."  

Pandit Godavari, Finance Minister, Orissa and Myari Shankar Raj, Parliamentary Secretary after meeting Phillips analysed him as "Interesting personality, inclined to carry to America, the real picture of the Indian situation". He thinks that in the reconstruction of the world after


the war, the American President will have a great share.
India too will have her claims recognised.  

After meeting Indians from different walks of life, Phillips assessment of the Indian situation which he wrote in a letter to the President was that the "Hindus were united in their distrust and intense dislike of the British, but they were not all together united behind Gandhi. Since the arrest of the Congress leaders, an organisation known as the Hindu Mahasabha under the leadership of V.D. Savarkar had sprung into prominence. Jinnah and the Muslim League were equally resentful of the British, but seemed to prefer to have the English remain, unless their own claims to Pakistan were guaranteed. The Indian members of the Viceroy's Council were doing their best to carry on the Government and at the same time keep their own job. The princes lived aloof and did not attempt to inject themselves into the religious and political controversies. While the caste system divided the people into rigid categories. In all the confusion resulting from religious, political and caste differences four men stood out who dominated the scene, Churchill and his Viceroy. Gandhi and Jinnah. While in London, Phillips

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^The Tribune, January 22, 1943, p.7.
had got the impression that the English were ready to grant Dominion Status if the Indians agreed among themselves, with regard to the form of their Government. The British Press was moving along these lines too. But in India the situation seemed to be reversed. The British officials in India seemed to be unaware of the changing attitudes in England, they could not really envisage a free India fit to govern itself. The only way to bring about an agreement between the Indians was to convince them of Britain's sincerity.

Phillips met the Viceroy, expressing the interest of the Americans, in seeing a settlement of India's problem. Phillips told the Viceroy, that a point had been reached at which a definite advance and possibly a settlement could be reached, probably in the direction of the establishment of a Provisional Government. Dev Das Gandhi had told him that his father would take a liberal view in such circumstances and could be relied upon to make considerable concession. The Secretary of the Muslim League, had given him to understand, that the Muslims could be relied upon to be most reasonable, if the Hindus would come and see them. He thought, it would be good if

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progress upon a provisional basis could be achieved, as soon as possible, and before the end of the war brought them up against their pledges. Phillips reiterated, that the Viceroy had asked him, to take a little longer to check his impressions. In his letter to L.S. Amery, the Viceroy voiced his dissent when he wrote, it will probably be necessary for me to make clear to Phillips, that he under a misapprehension, that while I should welcome any well meant suggestion, I am not prepared to share my responsibilities for handling the situation or to agree to any intervention by him independently or on behalf of the American Government. In a letter to Sir B. Glancy, the Viceroy voiced his apprehensions, when he wrote, "I get the impression from my conversation with Phillips, that he is disposed to think, that the Indian problem is very much more simple than it actually is and that it admits of a much more radical solution, than you or I with our greater experiences, would regard as practical politics."... A man of his standing and experience, is bound to give whatever conclusions he may form, in regard to the future of this

country some weight at Washington. It is therefore, of material importance that we can tactfully contribute to a balanced judgement on his part.  

With the Indian press, initial reticence and evasiveness were the characteristic features of President Roosevelt's personal representative. His silence was unfavourably commented upon. An editorial entitled "An American Test" said on the ground of humanity Americans should help to bring the Congress and the Government to an agreement, this could be done by Phillips, who ought not to waste time on secondary matters, while long time back he should have seen the jailed congress leaders. Another editorial in the paper, the Bombay Chronicle entitled, "Wanted Needs" took the President and Phillips to task, for not raising even a finger of protest against violations of his pledges. The editorial questioned how the Indian people, could put any faith in the sincerity of United States spokesman.  

Shortly after his arrival William Phillips found India confronting a dangerous situation. Gandhi who had been in jail, was on the verge of death as a result of his  

17 The Hindustan Times, February 3, 1943, p.5.  
prolonged fast. It seemed likely that if Gandhi died in jail, India would explode in a revolution, that would require extraordinary efforts to contain it and might entice the Japanese to invade the sub-continent. Phillips made several endeavours to meet Gandhiji. Initially the Viceroy Linlithgow was evasive to Phillip's request but finally told him that the Government would be greatly disturbed, if Phillips was to meet Gandhiji even if he were a free man during the period of his fast. William Phillips cabled Secretary of State Hull on February 16 asking him if he learned that Gandhi's death was imminent, the President and Hull would approve of his informally approaching the Viceroy of India Lord Linlithgow, to express the deep concern they felt over the political crisis in India. Phillips felt extreme embarrassment at the prospect of the creation of public impression, that the United States and he as the President's representative, were sitting with hands folded, doing nothing, on an issue that was likely to have grave inter-

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national reactions. In a letter to the President, Phillips described the crisis created through Gandhi's fast, "A strict censorship has kept from the American Press the widespread consternation caused by the official bulletins, which indicated, that he could not survive the fast. Muslims, Nationalists, Christians, joined in the appeal of the Hindus for clemency, partly out of real sympathy and partly out of dread of what would happen throughout India if Gandhi died during the fast. It is difficult for Anglo-Saxons to understand, the deep seated feelings which have been aroused by the performance of an old man of seventy three years... To vast number of Hindus, Gandhi has a semi-divine quality which separates him and elevates him above the rest of mankind. That such a being is willing to sacrifice himself, for the cause, that every Indian has at heart namely, the independence of India has touched the people as a whole... The whole episode has brought the United States into the picture and I have been literally besieged by callers and overwhelmed with telegrams from all parts of India, asking whether there could not be something done from Washington, or by me to relieve the present deadlock."22


Secretary of State cabled back concurring with Phillips suggestion and suggesting that he might at his discussion, express the American hope, that a way might be found to avoid the deterioration in the Indian situation which was sure to follow the death of Gandhi. Secretary of State in fact told the British Ambassador Lord Halifax, that if Gandhji died during the period of his fast, acute conditions might arise, which it would be important to foresee and prepare against. On February 20, 1943, Hull again met Halifax and conveyed that the President expressed the view that Gandhi should not be allowed to die in prison. However, Halifax a few days later, brought a telegram from Prime Minister Churchill, asking Halifax to make it clear to Cordell Hull, that the British Government, would not in any circumstances alter the course it was pursuing about Gandhi. "Great embarrassment between the British and American Governments would be created by any American intervention." President Roosevelt replied, that the United States Government would say nothing further now, but in the event of Gandhi's death, he would have some statement to make. He also made it clear, the fact, that his Government had expressed its concern over the possibility of Gandhi's death and its belief that the difficulties in the Indian situation would
be less great if he were alive then if he were permitted to die. 23

William Phillips met the Viceroy conveying how anxious United States was in view of the importance of India as a war base, for the unfortunate consequences which might follow should Gandhi die. The Viceroy response being, that the British Government was of the conviction, that their present policy was right and should Gandhi die, there would be a little amount of trouble, and after six months the atmosphere would be cleared and the progress made easier. 24 Lord Linlithgow also told Phillips that he was a war Viceroy, every step taken by him was first measured by the test whether it would aid the allied victory. He reiterated that there was not the slightest sign of any settlement, between the main communities at this time. Lord Linlithgow also told Phillips personally, that any suggestion that he or the United States Government were intervening or coming in any way, on this matter would be disastrous. The Viceroy wrote to L.S. Amery disapproving Phillips attitude. "I suggest that it only on the Roosevelt

level that you and I will be able to get things straight.
I am sure that we cannot go on as at present... it has
been a great mistake ever to have agreed to a representa-
tive of this nature or standing coming to the country, and
I must regret that I waived my objections to it, in
deference to your views." The Viceroy considered the
diplomatic representation made to the Government of India
about Gandhi through William Phillips, as an interference
by the American Government, in something that was none of
their business. Linlithgow wrote to Amery, "I must ask
that it be made clear formally, though of course with all
possible courtesy to United States Government, that any
communication of this nature must in future be made through
the diplomatic channel which is the Ambassador at Washington
and the Foreign Office and it be made clear, that His
Majesty's Government are not prepared to accept Phillips
as a direct intermediary with the Viceroy ... I should
wish to be able to inform Phillips myself of the defini-
tion of his functions, which I have suggested and of the
fact, that I do so, with full authority of the Cabinet.
It is essential equally that the State Department be simul-
taneously made aware of the situation that is arising, and
of the fact, that we are not prepared to agree to inter-
vention in handling a situation, already exceedingly
difficult and delicate, and bound to be aggravated by the
very slightest suggestion of interference, however, well intentioned from outside.  

In an other letter to Sir Lumley, Linlithgow wrote "It was never contemplated when he came here that he should intervene in the political affairs and while I readily accepted him on his personal record and took no exception to the redemption of the personal rank of Ambassodar, there are very strong obvious objections, to any United States interference in our internal affairs. Amery however, in his communication to Linlithgow pointed out that the main cause of the trouble lay in the President thinking that it was a part of their business to interfere in our internal affairs. "Whether that interference is communicated to our Ambassador at Washington to the Foreign Office here, or to you in Delhi it is equally intolerable."  

The Indians though continued requesting for more United States involvement in the Indian Affairs. Raja-gopalachari emphasized to Phillips, the importance of


United States making its position clear, in order to avoid inevitable conclusion on the Asiatic mind, that the United States was collaborating with Great Britain in the present crisis. He feared anti-white feelings would be the result of Gandhi's death. He also felt there would be recurrence of disturbances throughout the country which the Government would be able to put down only by force. He asked Phillips to do something to prevent this catastrophe. H.P.Mody and N.R.Sarkar resigned from the Viceroy's Council over the issue of Gandhi's fast.

The first indication given to the Indians that the situation in India was under discussion between the Government of United States and Great Britain was by Phillips, when he stated "Phases of the situation in India requiring discussion are being handled by the high officials of the Government of the United States and Great Britain."
In a letter to the Secretary of State William Phillips viewed sympathetically the Indian situation. "The Viceroy has remained adamant and has refused to listen to any appeals. He regards the case as one of defiance, to law and order, which must be dealt accordingly. He does not feel the pathos in the appeal of these millions, for freedom for their own country ... perhaps he is "Chip of the Old Block" that Americans knew something about in 1772". The Indians, Phillips wrote have now one fixed idea that Great Britain has no intention of quitting India, in the circumstances they turn to the United States, to get them help, because of their stand for liberty."31

In the United States, India's supporters such as Pearl Buck, Robert Bendiner, Managing Editor of the Nation and fifteen others telegraphed President Roosevelt stating that Gandhi's death appeared inevitable, unless immediate action was taken. Writing as American citizens "devoted to international understanding, they urged the President to ask for Mr. Gandhi's release."32 Wendell


Wilkie in his "One World" condemned United States silence on India. "We are punching holes in our reservoir of good will every day, by failing to define clearly our war aims. Besides giving our allies in Asia and in Eastern Europe something to fight with, we have got to give them the assurance what we are fighting for ... the wisest man in China said to me "when the aspiration of India for freedom was put aside to some future day, it was not Great Britain who suffered the loss of public esteem in the far east, it was the United States." Col. Frank Knox, United States Secretary for Navy in a speech on Lincoln's Birth Anniversary declared, "Isolation, political, economic and military was no longer possible, for the American people, whose welfare was bound up with the welfare of all peoples... America must accept her international responsibilities, as well as her rights, and must in concert with allies create the atmosphere and machinery by which nations could realise their political freedom and economic well being, secure from the threats of external aggression."  

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34 The Statesman, February 14, 1943, p.7.
Policy Association in its Bulletin admonished Americans in the following words, "It would be well for American public opinion to recognise that during the last year, antagonism between Great Britain and India had grown to such proportions that today not one popular group looked with any hope towards the Indian Government, although many sincerely desire to cooperate in the war effort."\textsuperscript{35}

\textbf{The Daily Mail} however, chose to support Churchill and wrote "To the great majority of Americans Mr. Gandhi's fast is a simple form of blackmail and both public and press deplore it. Following Government examples of non-interference, the Americans are exercising polite restraint, towards the entire crisis."\textsuperscript{36}

The New York \textit{Herald Tribune} maintained that the United States "cannot and should not attempt to intervene" in the Gandhi issue.\textsuperscript{37} While the British paper \textit{Manchester Guardian} debating the matter questioned forth, that what the Indian Government and their Government had to consider, was not merely the now barren question as to who is

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\textsuperscript{35} Reported in \textit{The Tribune}, January 3, 1943, p.7.
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\textsuperscript{36} Reported in \textit{The Tribune}, February 26, 1943, p.1.
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responsible for the disorder of last autumn, but the question as to what sort of problems will face us if Mr. Gandhi dies." Indians appealed both to Britain and the United States to intervene before Gandhi's condition took a turn for the worst. The Tagore Society in London sent a cable to Field Marshal Smuts. "We appeal to you in the name of humanity to do whatever is possible, to prevent Mr. Gandhi's death. His death at this moment will be the greatest tragedy in world history and will do irreparable harm, to the relations between East and West". In a cable to President Roosevelt Marshal Chiang Kai Shek and Stalin stated, "We urge you strongly to intervene in Gandhi's fast crisis, we submit that the Indian problem can be immediately solved, by handing over political power to the Indian Congress". The Allahabad Students Federation sent telegrams to Phillips and Jinnah urging them to press for Gandhiji's release. The Progressive Group

39 The Times of India, Bombay, February 24, 1943, p.1.
through its leader R.K.Raranjia requested United States intervention for Gandhiji's release. In a letter to William Phillips, Karanjia said, "I write this to impress upon you and the great democratic nation you represent, the views, hopes and fears of young India on the existing crisis. That crisis in our opinion can be resolved only by the immediate and unconditional release of Gandhiji. Any such consummation, it is our considered opinion, can only be brought about by the intercession of the United States." Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya sent a cable to Churchill "for the sake of India and of England I venture to make this last minute appeal to you to release Mahatma Gandhi". The Indian community in London represented by the Indian League resolved to send a deputation to the Prime Minister urging the immediate release of Gandhiji. The demand for the immediate release of Congress leaders and the establishment of a national Government based upon the unity of political parties like the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League was also expressed by a

delegation of the Communist Party that met Phillips. The policy of the British Government and its unwillingness to transfer power to Indian people who were honestly antifascist, the deputation told Phillips was mainly responsible for the present deadlock in India. The United Nations, the delegation stated, must in their own interest, intervene immediately and have the voluntary cooperation of India in this war of liberation.44

However, Gandhi survived the fast and the impasse continued. In United States failure of Gandhi's fast as a political weapon was commented upon in the papers. The Washington Post under the heading "The Fast that Failed" said "In failing to achieve the aims he hoped to achieve by his fast Gandhi has weakened his own hold over his party and his followers. In fact, in no year has the Congress been at such a low ebb of influence, instead of becoming weaker Britain has become stronger."45

After Gandhiji's successful conclusion of his fast, Phillips paid a visit to Bombay in March 1943. In Bombay, Phillips was the guest of Governor Lumley. The Governor

44 The Tribune, February 6, 1943, p.4.

introduced Phillips to a cross section of people which included two Hindus, two Muslims and two Parsees. The Congress opinion was put forward by C.V. Mehta. Ismail Ibrahim Chandigar, the President of Bombay Branch of the Muslim League, presented the Muslim point of view. Phillips also met V.D. Savarkar, President of the Hindu Mahasabha as well as other business and political leaders. Birla informed Phillips, that Gandhi had told him, that he did not approve of violence and sabotage and that India would continue to assist the allied powers even after independence. This convinced Phillips that Gandhi was not pro-Japanese as was charged by the British. Phillips left the residence of Governor Lumley and went to live with the United States Consulate in Bombay to meet the people freely. All sections of the people whom Phillips introduced wanted to end the deadlock and bring conciliation.  

Viceroy disapproved of the activities of Phillips. He wrote to Amery that in his opinion it was wholly improper that a representative of a foreign power, whether he was a diplomatic representative, or not, should go so near to interfere in the internal political affairs of India.

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an allied country as to indulge in discussion of this nature. "I can imagine what the reaction would be, were the American Ambassador in London or in peace time the German Ambassador to make himself a centre for discontented politicians, representing a sectional point of view in English political life ... And however, cautious Phillips may be, the natural effect of his activities on the Indian mind, the Viceroy reiterated, was to make people feel that United States was most closely interested and presumably anxious to give any assistance, and that it was legitimate for Indian politicians to try to bring pressure, to bear on them through the United States representative and his staff via Washington. No Indian knew or cared what Wilson, the late United States Commissioner did or said. But it was a difficult business when following Johnson and his known intrusion, into the Indian political fields, one had a man who had been an ambassador and still enjoyed that personal rank, covering the country in a manner that Phillips was doing and establishing political contacts such as those evident from his interviews. Linlithgow felt that they had been unwise in allowing a strong Ambassadorial flavour, to be injected into United States representative in India in the face of the constitutional position and the inter-
William Phillips wrote to President Roosevelt suggesting a way out of the impasse, through American cooperation. According to Phillips, Gandhi had completed his fast and the only result being increasing bitterness, against the British. The British had been in India for 150 years. They had acquired vast vested interests in the country, their withdrawal would jeopardize these interests. The Indians on the other hand, were caught in the new idea of freedom, for oppressed peoples. The Atlantic Charter had given the movement a great impetus. The President's speeches had given encouragement. The British declaration that freedom would be granted to India, after the war, brought the picture of Indian Independence as never before. According to Phillips, "What we can do is to try to induce the Indian leaders, to meet together and discuss the form of Government which they regarded as applicable to India, and then to show the world, that they had sufficient intelligence to tackle the problem. With the 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 the plans for the future. The Assembly could be presided over by an American who could exercise influence in harmonising the endless divisions of caste, religion, race and political views. The conference might be well under the patronage of the King Emperor, the President of United States. The President of Soviet Union and Chiang Kai Shek in order to bring pressure on Indian politicians, American chairmanship would have the advantage, not expressing the interest of America, in the future independence of India, but would also be guarantee to the Indians of the British offer of independence. If either of the parties refused to attend the conference, it would be notice to all the world, that India was not ready for self Government. The plan according to Phillips provided the guarantee required by the Indians and was in line with British declared intentions. 48

Before his return to the United States William Phillips had visited the Provinces of Madras, Bombay, Bombay.

princely states of Hyderabad, Travancore and Mysore which had strengthened his impression that anti-British sentiments were on the increase. He met C.Rajgopalachari and other leaders of the south. Phillips found no enthusiasm among the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Maharaja of Mysore towards his Mission. In Madras, Phillips did not stay with the British Governor James Hope. Phillips met deputations of Hindu Mahasabha, the Muslim League and liberal parties. He also saw prominent leaders like K.R. Srinivasan, Editor of Swadesimitran, S.Guruswami, Secretary All India Railwaymen's Federation, E.V.Ramaswami Naicker, the leader of the Justice Party and other political leaders. Rajgopalachari told him that if Gandhi and Jinnah were permitted to get together, they would find a way towards a settlement. While the Prime Minister of Travancore-Cochin, Rama Swami Aiyyar suggested that the King Emperor should make a declaration, of the British intentions to grant independence and in the meantime form a provisional government headed by M.A. Jinnah, in order to satisfy his vanity. While in his meeting with Jinnah

Phillips felt that Jinnah and the Muslim League, had been growing in influence, as the idea of Pakistan had taken hold of the imagination of the Muslim people. Jinnah believed that such a state would be able to conduct its own affairs within the Commonwealth of Nations and its relations with Hindu India, could be regulated with a treaty.\textsuperscript{50} The Freedom Group formed by representative of Parsees presented a memorandum to Phillips, in which they pointed out, "It is our emphatic opinion that as far as the problem of India is concerned, there is no separate Parsee or Hindu or Muslim point of view. That problem is the simple problem of securing a free and independent position for India, in the comity of nations.\textsuperscript{51} Phillips found that the United States was still looked upon as one and the only hope and the people hoped, that the United States Government, would use its good offices to bring the opposing forces together in the interest of India and of the United Nations.\textsuperscript{52}

Before leaving India, Phillips wrote to President Roosevelt summarizing the Indian situation. "India is suffering from paralysis, the people are discouraged and

\textsuperscript{50} Phillips, William, Ventures in Diplomacy, p. 372.

\textsuperscript{51} The Bombay Chronicle, March 17, 1943, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{52} Phillips, William, Ventures in Diplomacy, p. 372; Foreign Relation Papers, Vol. IV, April 3, 1943, p. 211; Roosevelt Papers, File No. 12, April 7, 1943, pp. 84-90.
there is a feeling of growing helplessness, there is a very little thought given to the war among Indians, India is an state of interia, prostration, divided counsel and helplessness with growing distrust and dislike for the British, disillusion with regard to United States. The British are sitting "Pretty" they have been completely successful in their policy of keeping the lid-on, as time goes on Indians are coming more and more to disbelieve, in the American gospel of freedom of oppressed people ... to them America has more recently merely repeated the old British assurances without, however, indicating any willingness to go further even at moments when public expected some evidence of willingness to take action, in support of the well known American principles. From the Indian point of view, America has allowed such moments to slip by in silence and this has convinced them that America, stood solidly with the British in the past, present and future, Indian policies of British India... the only remedy to the disturbing situation is to try with every means to make Indians feel that America is with them and in a position to go beyond mere public assurances of friendship.53

On the eve of his departure for the United States, William Phillips showed United States concern, when in a favourite chat with the press, Phillips stated, that he was not allowed to see Gandhiji. "I should like to have met and talked with Mr. Gandhi. I requested the appropriate authorities for permission to do so and was informed that they were unable to grant the necessary facilities." United States columnist Drew Pearson however, declared that Ambassador Phillips could certainly have seen anyone in India if he had really tried. United States paper Evening Star condemned the Government of India's attitude. "It is extremely difficult to understand, the reasoning behind the refusal of British authorities in India, to grant the request of William Phillips, the personal representative of President Roosevelt, for an interview with Mohan Das Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, imprisoned nationalist leaders." 


55 The Hindustan Times, April 19, 1943, p.1.

The Indians criticized the British for not allowing William Phillips a meeting with Gandhiji. The Economist stated that "Indian intransigence and dissension, must bear the main responsibility for the present impasse, only strengthens the responsibility of British Administration in India, to do nothing to embitter the relations still more and every thing to prove even handed justice. India's destiny is now in Indian hands, that is why the action of the Viceroy in refusing Mr. William Phillips access to Mr. Gandhi was impolitic."57

On reaching the United States William Phillips in his conversation with President Roosevelt emphasized the fact that as India was bound to be an important base for their future operations, against Burma and Japan, it would be very important that they have around them a sympathetic India, rather than an indifferent and possibly a hostile India. He reiterated, in view of the military position in India, they should have a voice in the Indian matters. Phillips continued, "It is not right for the British to say, "This is none of your business" when we alone presumably will have the major part to

play in the future struggle with Japan ... the people of Asia and I am supported in this opinion, by other diplomatic and military observers, who cynically regard this war as one between Fascist and Imperialist power. A generous British gesture to India will change this undesirable political atmosphere in India." Before leaving for London, William Phillips again expressed his concern with regard to the Indian situation. He wrote, that while the political unrest largely affected only the more agitated Indians, there was in addition a disturbing and even alarming situation developing among the uneducated masses, particularly in Bengal on account of the famine. It had to be borne in mind, that the frontiers of Bengal touched those of Assam, where American forces were being concentrated in great numbers. In fact, Assam was the principle base, from which their future efforts against Burma would be directed. If only from the point of strategy, should they not avoid having a hostile population, close to their important base and lines of communication.  

Phillips in his meeting with Churchill, expressed his desirability, of a proclamation by the King Emperor to the effect that they really meant their word about what according to Churchill meant "Kicked Out" in due course and secondly, to form an Indian Ministry to manage their own Home Affairs. Churchill replied, that while they were responsible for the defence of India, they could not mar the integrity of control. Churchill in his note to Amery stated that "Phillips is a friend of President, and I have no doubt that he will do a certain amount of harm. He does not think that he will return to India, I hope he is right."60

Phillips continued to voice his antipathy to the Indian situation, as being handled by the British. In an address to a group at Harvard, he stated that India was governed by four men, Churchill, Amery, Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief. The Viceroy's Council was a rubber stamp and the provincial Governors dictators. Churchill and Amery knew nothing of India except what Viceroy told them. The old guards of provincial governors was still completely Victorian in outlook and

did not want to grant India independence. He held that the British could not maintain, the status quo until the war was won. The situation was deteriorating and the lid would blow off. He was worried particularly with reference to the large American army, which was out in India, and might get cut off. Phillips continued that the British believed, that withdrawal would mean a blood-bath or pretended to believe it - he did not. He was all for making the Viceroy's Council real, by putting on it men chosen by Indians and giving them real power. A real cabinet instead of a rubber stamp and a proclamation by the King Emperor, that he really had the independence of India at heart. 61

While the United States public and press continued to speak vociferously on the Indian issue, the New York Herald Tribune correspondent Sonia Timara who had visited India wrote, "The British policy here at present is the same as it was 50 years ago when the First World War broke out. The Indians blame the British, therefore, the British blame the Indians and both are right. The fact remains that things are in a bad state

and the conflict slows down the solution of any economic or social problem, because the whole atmosphere is vitiated. Albert Viton, author of "American Empire in Asia" torpedoed the entire British Empire. He wanted the British to leave India bag and baggage. He said that the British argument that India is immature for independence, is merely a cloak for the retention of British rule...

Viton, proposed that Britain, United States, Russia and perhaps China should pledge that democratic self-government will be the corner-stone of a post-war settlement for India. Kate L. Mitchel in her "India American View" declared that the people of United States have a great duty and responsibility to fulfill in meeting the challenge posed by India. Pearl Buck in an article in the New York Times said that Britain's friends who profoundly disagreed with Mr. Churchill's Indian policy could, after voicing disagreement allow him to go on sure that in the long run, others if not he would carry out, that policy towards India, which will be in the best interest of a contented Empire. Walter Phelps Hull, noted

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64 Reported in Times of India, Bombay, May 22, 1943, p. 7.
65 Reported in the Statesman, April 25, 1943, p. 4.
historian and Professor of History at Princeton University in the course of a lengthy article on the Indian problem wrote, "Despite what Churchill and Amery have said, one does not feel, that all negotiation are for ever impossible." Churchill has a blind spot in regard to India and so too has Amery. Both of them are imperialist by long training and conviction. Churchill has all his life been opposed to Indian devolution... One does not want to over emphasise the parallel, but one does wish, that both Churchill and Amery would read over quietly Edmund Burke on conciliation with America. 66 American leading publicist, radio commentators and editors met Anthony Eden and discussed problems relating to India. According to New York Times intense interest in Indian problem was becoming evident by the Americans asking British lecturers "What about India?" 67 While Patricia Russel supporting United States writers stated in The Manchester Guardian, "What does Mr. Churchill mean when he speaks of the British Empire at the liquidation of which he declines to preside?" To those of us who are engaging in attempting


to allay American suspicion of English intention in this war, the last pronouncement of Mr. Churchill has caused profound dismay."68

Summer Welles defending the State Department's policy declared, "The present military situation in the far east is one where in all of us including the People of India face grave perils. The future constitutional status of India, is a tremendously complicated and difficult problem. The United States are anxious to give full assistance to its solution. The people of India have been most solemnly assured, that as soon as the necessity of war permit, they will be given an opportunity to choose freely the form of government they desire... but to make active intervention in the Indian situation as a test of liberalism, he confessed, was beyond his comprehension."69 However, considerable interest was caused by President Roosevelt's Monterey speech. He said,"The day of exploitation of resources and people of one country for the benefit of any group or another country is definitely over." Observers pointed out that while the

68 The Hindustan Times, April 5, 1943, p.3.
President had in mind American oil properties in Mexico, he doubtless was aware that the statement could apply to the British Empire.  

The Indians continued to appeal for United States help and felt greatly concerned over United States attitude regarding India. Giving his impression of the discussion at the Pacific Relations Conference and of American, British and Chinese opinion on Indian problems, Sir, M.Zafrullah Khan, one of the leaders of the Indian Delegation said that United States and Canada quite sincerely desired, that the Indian question should be settled as quickly as possibly, and even during the war it was possible and necessary to strive for that settlement. Sir M.Zafrullah Khan said that he did not notice any desire in the United States for direct intervention. M.C.Khanna, who also attended the Pacific Relations Conference and had also visited the United States, spoke of American reaction to the Indian situation as being "The Americans I believe are interested in India's fight for freedom, not because they have any

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70 The Tribune, April 23, 1943, p.4.  
71 The Hindustan Times, April 15, 1943, p.3.
particular love for India, but because the Americans on the whole believe in freedom for all people all the world over. The sympathetic leaning of the average American towards India's freedom have been affected by the exigencies of the war, and he feels that the freedom of India is a post-war issue. Some Americans also believe, specially those in the vicinity of the White House in Washington that it is entirely an Anglo-Indian problem. Asked to amplify his statement Khanna said that the feeling in these circles was that Churchill had sold a bill of goods to Roosevelt on India. Sardar K.M. Panikar, Minister from Bikaner who also attended the Pacific Relations Conference declared that "People in America are generally not much interested in India and show little appreciation of Indian matters, excepting those few who have made a study of the Indian question." Addressing a meeting of the "Indian Merchants Chamber, Seth Haridas Madhavdas pointed out, that ever since the war started, hopes had been raised in this country regarding the intervention of the United States

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72 The Times of India, Bombay, April 30, 1943, p.4; The Bombay Chronicle, April 28, 1943, p.1.

73 The Times of India, Bombay, April 1, 1943, p.8.
of America for getting the Indian tangle solved. "I have not much hope", that America or any other country will help us to get our demands vis-a-viz the British Government satisfied. The responsibility is ours and we shall have to work it up." The Hindustan Times in its editorial "What About India" criticized both United States and England, when it wrote "In the short formal statement issued by Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt there occurs the somewhat cryptic statement that agreement has also been reached upon the political issues underlying or arising out of the military operation. It may not be wise to read too much into these words, but as it is now officially stated that the Quebec Conference was concerned very largely with war against Japan and effective aid to China, it would be height of unwisdom if both engaged in this conference have shown themselves unwilling about the Indian political problem. The Indian League of America appealed for United States mediation in a full page advertisement in the Washington Post. It declared that only a fraction of India's man power and resources

74The Bombay Chronicle, May 1, 1943, p.2.

75The Hindustan Times, August 26, 1943, p.3.
were in the fight because of the lack of freedom. Sardar J.J. Singh, President of India League in America offered his resignation calling for resumption of negotiation, between the Indian parties and the Indian Government, and formation of Indian Provisional National Government and a complete post-war freedom for India, guaranteed by the United Nations. The Indian Freedom Campaign Committee of America held a meeting demanding the release of Congress leaders. A dozen members of the committee bearing placards and distributing pamphlets paraded the main streets of Washington.

However, in 1943, due to military consideration United States had began to waiver towards Britain, became clear from a comparison of public opinion survey conducted in 1942 and 1943. While in July 1942 from 43 persons of the cross-section examined and 100% of those questioned, 55% persons were in favour of India's immediate independence. However, in April 1943 from the 62% of the cross section examined and 100% of those questioned, only 19% were in favour of India's immediate independence. The United States Government on account of the exigencies of the war withdrew from interference in Indian affairs and put very little pressure on Britain. The Indian stalemate continued.

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76 The Tribune, August 12, 1943, p.6.

77 Ibid.