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## In the Shadow of World War II: U.S. Role in India's Quest for Independence

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During the pivotal years of India's struggle for independence, it was courted by the allied powers including Great Britain and the United States. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill had differing expectations vis-a-vis India. For Churchill, India was too important a country for its empire and could not be given up easily, whereas for Roosevelt, India should be allowed some form of autonomy in its internal affairs as a reward for India's participation in the war efforts. For their part, the leaders of India's independence movement, the time was ripe to reap the maximum bargaining leverage. This paper considers to what extent Roosevelt's plan for India succeeded, what was the main hindrance in Britain granting independence to India, and what was the reaction of the Indian nationalist leaders.

インドが独立を求めて苦闘した注目すべき数年間、イギリス、アメリカを含む連合国はインドの歓心を買おうと努めた。フランクリン・ルーズベルト大統領とチャーチル首相とはそれぞれの思惑を懐いてインドに対した。インドが大英帝国にとって重要な国で容易には手放せないとチャーチルは考えていたし、一方ルーズベルトはインドの大戦参加の代償として、内政についてはいくらかの自治を許すべきであると考えていた。インド独立の指導者は、これを交渉を有利に進める最大の時期の到来と受けとめた。本稿はルーズベルトのインド政策がどの程度成功したか、そしてイギリスがインドに独立を許す主な障害は何であったか、最後にインドの独立指導者はいかに反応したかを考察しようとするものである。

### The Context

It was in April 1942, when the leaders of the Congress Party of India met one-on-one with a personal representative of the President of the United States. The Congress Party leaders in India at the time were involved in serious and delicate negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps. He had been deputed by the British Cabinet with specific proposals in order to win the Congress leaders' support for the Allied war efforts. On April 3, 1942, when the talks were at an extremely crucial stage, Colonel Louis Johnson arrived in New Delhi, as the personal emissary of the President of the United States. The timing of the Johnson trip and the manner in which it was projected in the Indian and American media created a tremendous impact. In India, it was widely perceived that the arrival of the Cripps mission from the British Government must have been due to American pressure and that Colonel Johnson was dispatched to India at the specific request of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In fact it was assumed that President Roosevelt was in direct touch with Johnson to speed up the dialogue leading toward Indian independence.

The impact of the Johnson mission on Indian opinion especially the nationalist wing can be gauged from the fact that each important leader of the time tended to accept that belief. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, India's first President in the post-independent era wrote in his autobiography that the United States was "constantly prodding" Britain to come to a settlement with India. Dr. Prasad stated in another work that Stafford Cripps was probably sent to India because "America insisted on it".<sup>1</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru during his official visit to the United States in 1949 as Prime Minister, declared that all Indians knew "what a great interest President Roosevelt had in our country's freedom and how he exerted his great influence towards that end".<sup>2</sup>

How valid are these beliefs? What indeed was the attitude of the Roosevelt Administration towards India during that period? What was Colonel Johnson's mission and what problems did he encounter? An attempt will be made in the subsequent pages to address the above questions and related events.

A number of historians have dealt with this subject in their writings. Christopher Thorne has tried to show Franklin D. Roosevelt in a good light in terms of his active hands-on approach toward the issue of Indian independence. Gary Hess has taken a balanced view of the whole picture by putting the blame on Roosevelt, Churchill and the Congress leaders.

Others, such as Robert Dalleck have followed the "consensus" line in drawing the conclusion that FDR had a keen interest in the progress toward independence of India from British colonial rule. My research argues that such a conclusion is weak and is based upon insufficient evidence. The evidence, as I see it, does not warrant a conclusion that the Indian struggle, in its most crucial phase in the year 1942, received long term tangible support from the FDR Administration. It further shows that President Roosevelt, while broadly sharing the prevailing mood, took certain concrete actions intended "for the record". He was content to follow a "policy" which his own personal representative in India described as one of "silence and inaction."

## Historical Overview

The ongoing developments of World War II in 1941 especially within Asia, Japan in particular, forced the State Department to be conscious of the importance of ensuring more effective representation of American interests in India. There were American consulates in Bombay and Calcutta but the British Government had stubbornly refused permission for the US Government's request to open an office in New Delhi, the capital. Whitehall was, however, successfully, persuaded to alter that stand when on 28 May 1941, Secretary of State Cordell Hull told the British Ambassador in Washington, Lord Halifax, that arrangements should be made for "closer personal relationships" between representatives of the governments of India and the United States, especially in view of the fact that India, being a huge country, was assuming "a position of increasing importance as a source of materials essential to the implementation of the coordinated programmes of the Government of the United States and the extension of aid to the British empire. . . ."<sup>3</sup> The British yielded to the American demand and on 21 July 1941 it was announced that Thomas. M. Wilson, Consul General in Calcutta, had been named "Commissioner of the United States of America" in New Delhi and that Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai, senior member of the Indian Civil Service, would be the Agent General of the Government of India in Washington. The arrangement, however, was not prompted by any desire on the part of the leaders of the FDR Administration to influence the attitude of the British government towards the question of self-determination for the Indian people. This is reflected in the way in which the Under Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, had brushed aside a recommendation by Wallace Murray, Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, and Adolf Berle, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State. Berle, in a memorandum, stressed that a settlement between Great Britain and India would bring about the "willing cooperation of the latter in the war effort".<sup>4</sup> This suggestion was virtually ignored at the very start: neither the Secretary of State nor the Under Secretary gave it more than fleeting consideration. The Secretary was apparently fully satisfied when he heard from Lord Halifax that "sentiment in India at this time is very good," and that it was not feasible or even necessary now to make further liberalizing concessions".<sup>5</sup> Thus the United States, the first of Britain's colonies to win freedom, decided not to change its "hands off" attitude towards the movement for Indian independence. The ongoing struggle of India's quest for independence and the significance of the awakening of the subject peoples of Asia and Africa that it symbolized, had apparently made little impact on Franklin D. Roosevelt or his Secretary of State, Cordell Hull. In the State Department itself, the influence of Under-Secretary Welles was often greater than his boss, but as far as India was concerned, both of them looked to the same source of information, namely Lord Halifax.

Though overruled by their superiors, Murray and Berle were not willing to give up their point of view that the United States should try to promote a settlement of the Indian issue. They got an opportunity to resume their efforts when, on 1 August 1941, the U.S. Ambassador to London, Lord Winant, suggested that the United States might try to persuade Britain to agree to a dominion status for India. A friendly India and an allied China, he said, would be significant factors for promoting stability in the Far East and serving as a bridge between the Orient and the West. The Ambassador added that there was support for giving dominion status to India in the British cabinet itself but that the Prime Minister had opposed the idea. Unless the United States expressed interest in the matter, it might not be considered at all, Winant wrote.<sup>6</sup> Berle promptly suggested that the State Department should instruct the Ambassador to take up the matter with the British government. But Welles and Hull again rejected the suggestion. "In my own judgement this government is not warranted in

suggesting officially to the British government what the status of India should be," Welles opined. He and Hull, however, agreed that if Roosevelt was inclined to proceed with the matter, he should discuss it in "a very personal and confidential way" directly with Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister.<sup>7</sup>

Apparently Hull and Welles made no special efforts to brief Roosevelt on the Indian issue or to suggest his raising it in a "very personal" way with Churchill, during the Atlantic Ocean conference, 9-12 August 1941. The much trumpeted proclamation of the Atlantic Charter concerning "the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live," and the subsequent assertion by Churchill that it did not apply to "the regions and peoples who owe allegiance to the British Crown" were too well known to independent observers in Washington, London and elsewhere. American ambassador Winant had tried to persuade Churchill to drop the reference in his speech to the non-applicability of the charter to India and other colonial possessions of Britain. Churchill flatly refused to accept the suggestion and asserted that India was a crucial component of the British colonial empire and the issue was strictly a "matter of internal British politics".<sup>8</sup> Churchill's pronouncements had a profound effect on certain segments of the State Department. The Chief of Near Eastern Affairs, Wallace Murray, made yet another attempt to question the wisdom of the "do nothing" policy of the United States Government. In view of Churchill's convenient interpretation of the Atlantic Charter, "there may be greater justification than there has been heretofore of an effort on the part of this Government to assist in a solution of problems involved in the political status of India and Burma," Murray argued. Pointing out that the political situation in India was deteriorating rapidly, he urged the Secretary to persuade the President to take up the matter with Churchill. Sumner Welles disagreed vigorously with Murray. The extent of Welles' acquiescence to the British point of view could be gauged from this assertion he made to the Secretary of State:

Deeply as I sympathize with the objective [of Mr. Murray]. . . , I cannot believe that any officials in our government are sufficiently familiar with Indian affairs to make it possible for their judgements and recommendations to be put up against the judgements and recommendations of the competent British authorities themselves.<sup>9</sup>

Welles added that pro-Indian opinion in the United States was not a factor of any political significance. The American Institute of Public Opinion on 13 August 1941 revealed that 43 percent favored granting India complete independence. But the interesting fact is, 34 percent did not have any opinion about it<sup>10</sup>. By implication Welles sought to stress the point that pro-British opinion in the United States was a factor of substantial political significance. Further, an attempt by the United States to intervene "even in an informal manner suggested" might be deeply resented by Prime Minister Winston Churchill." For all these reasons, wrote Welles, "I recommend against the intervention of this Government at this time in the manner proposed unless we are convinced that some step of this character is imperatively required from the standpoint of our own national policy, and of our national defense".<sup>11</sup>

Three weeks later, the United States was at war with Japan and its allies. The major initial success that the Japanese were able to score apparently led to some rethinking in the highest echelons of the State Department. As a result, FDR made an attempt to discuss the Indian problem with Churchill when the latter visited Washington in December of 1941. The Prime Minister must have felt that if he appeared to yield even slightly, American pressure on him might steadily increase. His response to Roosevelt was a diplomatic one. "I reacted", Churchill recalled subsequently, "so strongly and at such length that he (Roosevelt) never raised it again".<sup>12</sup> The President quickly reassured the Prime Minister that he was not attempting to intrude into Britain's affairs or offering his good offices to find a solution. "For the love of Heaven don't bring me into this, though I do want to be of help. It is strictly speaking none of my business, except insofar as it is a part and parcel of the successful fight that you and I are making".<sup>13</sup> Around this time, FDR reached the conclusion that the posting of a high profile American representative to India was necessary in view of the increasing strategic importance of the country. The rapidly deteriorating military situation in the Far East lent some urgency to the Indian question. Moreover, Chiang Kai-Shek in a message to FDR asserted that the Indian political problem should be "immediately and urgently solved" and that if the British Government did not "fundamentally change its policy towards India, it would be like presenting India to the enemy and inviting them to quickly occupy India".<sup>14</sup>

Military disasters in Asia and the total failure of Britain to get the support of people in Malaya and Burma triggered alarm in the U.S. Congress. The members of the Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S. Senate took notice of the Indian issue. At a meeting that directed sharp questions at a representative of the State Department demanding to know what the policy of the Administration was towards the situation in India, Assistant Secretary Breckenridge Long made an appraisal of the implications of the attitude of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee that was bound to make the Administration take up the matter more seriously. He warned that some senators might use the Indian issue not for an attack on Britain but on the Roosevelt Administration for its failure to use its authority to strengthen the military and manpower position of the United States in the Far East.<sup>15</sup> Responding immediately, plans were finalized for dispatching to India a technical mission under the Chairmanship of Colonel Louis Johnson, a former Assistant Secretary of War. It is not clear whether in nominating Johnson at this time the President envisaged any special mission to be performed by the latter in connection with the visit of Sir Stafford Cripps to India. According to acting Secretary Welles, the appointment was made because the President felt that it was essential "to have in India one who has had close contact with military affairs and who is well-known to the leaders of our armed forces"<sup>16</sup>. If that was the case, Roosevelt clearly had not deputed Johnson to try his hand as a political "troubleshooter" in India. It does not appear as though Johnson was given any detailed briefings concerning the likely impact of the British proposals and the response to them by the Indian parties. During a visit to the State Department prior to his departure, Colonel Johnson complained that he had not been given "any positive information about anything". All that Assistant Secretary G. Howland Shaw could tell him was that he must approach his task "with utmost care".<sup>17</sup> It also shows the typical State Department attitude to an important presidential appointment in Asia, made outside of their hierarchy.

Churchill's announcement regarding the deputation of Sir Stafford Cripps to India received very favorable coverage in the United States. The British cabinet's proposals were unveiled by Cripps in India on 30 March. The British proposals contained an unequivocal promise of dominion status at the end of the war. But this was coupled with provisions for the non-accession of any province or princely state to the Indian union. Thus the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan carved out from the predominantly Muslim populated states was conceded in principle. To many Indians, Cripps proposals contained the seeds of the partition of India. It was further provided that in the constitution making body that was to be set up at the end of the war, the Indian states were to be represented not by persons elected by the people of the states but by those nominated by the respective princes. While these far-reaching provisions were intended to become applicable only after the war was, the British proposals were remarkably vague on plans for the immediate future of India. The proposals that Cripps presented did not go even as far as the concept of a temporary dominion government that FDR had suggested in his letter to Churchill. But in the United States these were welcomed with eloquent praise. Senate Majority leader, Allen W. Barkley (D-Kentucky) described the proposals as a "basis for a fair and equitable settlement".<sup>18</sup> Editorials writers described the British proposals as a "vital contribution to the war effort" and "a concrete application of the principles of the Atlantic Charter." *The New York Times* hailed the British offers as one of the great revolutions in all history while *The New York Herald Tribune* described it as "a momentous step in the evolution of the British Empire into the British Commonwealth." *The Washington Post* was completely satisfied that the status offered to India met all the aspirations voiced by the Indian politicians. Liberal weeklies like *The Nation* and *The New Republic* also commented favorably on the proposals.<sup>19</sup> But when reports from New Delhi indicated that the Indian leaders were not exactly welcoming the Cripps proposals, the American media used sharp language to remind the Indians of their responsibilities. *The New York Times* had indicated, "what was in store for the Indian leaders if they were to be foolhardy enough to reject the British plan. 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 American sympathy and the offer of American comradeship that is now theirs for the asking." Painting a frightening scene of the danger to the world of the domination of Japanese and German forces in the event of a collapse of India, *The New York Times*, declared that if "by hesitating now, Nehru, Gandhi and other Indian leaders help produce this world catastrophe, they will not be remembered as friends of human freedom".<sup>20</sup>

While the American press was busy depicting Congress leaders as reckless and irresponsible, the shuttle diplomacy of Colonel Johnson was in full speed in New Delhi. Johnson by this time had concluded an early round of talks with Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Wavell and various Congress leaders. The main point of dispute seemed to center around whether to allocate the sensitive department to an Indian national or not. Sensing the failure of the Cripps Mission, Johnson earnestly urged Roosevelt in this matter in order to prevent a collapse of the negotiations. "Unless the President feels that he can intercede with Churchill, it would seem that Cripps' efforts are doomed to failure," Johnson wrote. "Cripps so believes too. Such failure will adversely affect war effort. I respectfully urge therefore that the President. . . consider further efforts with Churchill".<sup>21</sup> The first high-ranking emissary of the President of the United States to India had made a specific request for a gesture by the President aimed at seeking the enthusiastic cooperation of India in the war against Japanese and fascist aggression. Such a development was also bound to be a decisive step in the progress of India's march towards freedom. The man to whom the request was addressed had, in innumerable speeches, spoken for his country's devotion to freedom and democracy and of his relentless opposition to the subjugation of peoples by other peoples and countries.

Acting Secretary Sumner Welles discussed Johnson's cable with President and on 5 April 1942 sent the following message to Colonel Johnson, the Personal Representative:

The President asked me to let you know ... that he does not consider it desirable or expedient for him, at least at this juncture, to undertake any further personal participation in the discussion. You know how earnestly the President has already tried to be of help. It is feared that if at this moment he interposed his own views, the result would complicate further an already overcomplicated situation. In view of the already increasing critical military situation do you not believe that there is increasing likelihood of the responsible leaders adopting a more constructive attitude?<sup>22</sup>

Johnson understood the underlying tone of the President's message. However, he was cautiously optimistic of finding a common ground between Cripps, the Congress Party in India and the Roosevelt Administration. On 4 May 1942, Johnson forwarded to the Secretary of State the formula which the Congress Party, according to him, was prepared to accept in order to bring about a settlement. Under Johnson's compromise formula the Defense Department was to be in charge of the representative Indian member and to enjoy power over all the matters except those exercised by the Commander-in-Chief as the War member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and a War department was to be constituted to take such functions as were not with the Defense Department.<sup>23</sup> If the British Government agreed, then Nehru, Jinnah and Rajagopalachari could be brought together in Delhi and could proceed to London, if necessary, for finalizing the agreement. Johnson then made an impassioned appeal for an American initiative to bring Britain and India together. He wrote:

... I believe no one but President (Roosevelt) can move successfully. Nehru writes me today of "fierce feeling against Britain." America alone can save India for the united national cause and my suggestion ought not to be disposed of on basis of meddling in internal affairs of a subject nation. I respectfully urge that saving India concerns America as much as Great Britain. The effort cannot harm. It may be the miracle. I urge immediate consideration and being on the ground, pray for President's aid.<sup>24</sup>

President Roosevelt declined to respond to Johnson's request. "The position in India today is largely military," the President wrote. Any proposal must be expanded from the view of whether it would aid or hamper the military effort. The President responded that it was unlikely that the formula suggested by Johnson would be accepted by various groups in India and by the British. "On balance, therefore, I am, inclined to the view that at the present moment the risks involved to an unsuccessful effort to solve the problem outweigh the advantages that might be obtained if a satisfactory solution could be found," Roosevelt added.<sup>25</sup> In this context, the role of Harry Hopkins, one of FDR's closest advisors needs some attention. On April 9, 1942, Hopkins had arrived in Britain with the U.S. Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, for discussion with Churchill on the question of an invasion of France by Germany across the English Channel. What transpired at the crucial meeting with Churchill was set forth by Hopkins in his diary. Churchill read out a dispatch that he had received from the Viceroy on the Cripps-Johnson Plan on India. The Viceroy was perplexed because Johnson acted and behaved as though he were sent to India as Roosevelt's special envoy to mediate in the Indian crisis. Churchill was in no mood to give Johnson's

compromise formula a try. Hopkins tried to measure Churchill by stating President Roosevelt's thoughts in this regard.

I told the Prime Minister that Johnson's original mission had nothing to do with the British proposals and that I was sure that he was not acting as the representative of the President in mediating the India business. That I believed that Cripps was using Johnson for his own ends, Cripps being very anxious to bring Roosevelt's name into the picture. That it was in Cripps' interest to get Roosevelt identified with the proposals, I told Mr. Churchill of the President's instructions to me that he would not be drawn into the Indian business except at the personal request of the Prime Minister and then only if he had an assurance given from India and Britain that any plan that he worked out would be acceptable, and that Roosevelt was unwilling to be put into a situation before the world in which he undertook to moderate between the conflicting forces and then to have these forces turn down his proposals".<sup>26</sup>

Hopkins' clarifications removed whatever uncertainties must have been in Churchill's mind regarding the exact nature and scope of Colonel Johnson's mandate. So now, Colonel Johnson was left in a lose-lose situation between President Roosevelt, who sent him to India as the personal emissary, and Churchill, who was determined to undermine Johnson's formula at any cost. With his physical health also deteriorating, Johnson decided to leave New Delhi and informed the Secretary of State accordingly. Immediately, thereafter, Johnson informed the Secretary of State that he had decided to return home.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Following the outbreak of the Second World War, the attention of the American public was concentrated on the European scene. While in the early months of the war, the majority of Americans wanted the United States to remain neutral in the conflagration, interventionist sentiment began to gain ground swiftly, especially after Hitler's hegemony over Western Europe became a reality. The Roosevelt Administration favored a policy of all-out assistance to Great Britain to check the grand war designs of Germany, Italy and their allies. The Administration in Washington was reluctant to put disproportionate pressure on Britain to give self-government status to India because FDR Administration officials were apparently convinced that once the war was over, Britain could be persuaded to give up its colonial control of India.

The ongoing escalation of the Second World War in the Far East led by Japan prompted a small group in the State Department to recommend a more active American interest in inducing Britain to reach a settlement with India. But the recommendations of Wallace Murray, Chief of the Near Eastern Affairs Division and of Assistant Secretary Berle, were decisively rejected by Secretary Hull and Under Secretary Welles.

After Pearl Harbor and the string of Japanese victories in South-East Asia, Chief of Staff Marshall received a memorandum from Dwight Eisenhower, Assistant Chief to the Pentagon's War Plan Division, to "hold on to India and Ceylon." FDR's first and only attempt to discuss the Indian political situation was decisively rejected by Winston Churchill. The President's two letters to Churchill also received a lukewarm response at the Prime Minister's secretariat in London.

Colonel Louis Johnson was not sent to India with any mandate from Roosevelt to help bring about a settlement. His appointment as Special Representative was prompted by the military implications of the approach of war towards India's borders particularly on the eastern flank including Burma. Johnson's activities during the political negotiations with the Congress Party leaders in New Delhi were on his own initiative and were not in pursuance of any directives from the President or the State Department and with his core beliefs that he would be able to sell his ideas on the issue of granting independence to India.

Leaders of the Indian National Congress, the premier party fighting for India's independence, who were dealing for the first time with a "Personal Representative of the President of the United States", believed that Johnson's vigorous moves reflected the position of Roosevelt and his Administration. These leaders had hardly any concrete knowledge of the background and nature of Johnson's mission and his relationship with the President. While Nehru was impressed by Colonel Johnson, Winston Churchill had an important ally in the person of Harry Hopkins, FDR's close advisor who was more sympathetic to the British official position on the India issue. With Hopkins teaming up with Churchill, Johnson's efforts had little chance to succeed—especially in view of the fact that Roosevelt, Hull and

Welles did not have any well-articulated convictions on the significance of the Indian National Movement and its far reaching ramifications in Asia. FDR and his principal advisors were undoubtedly men of good will who viewed with sympathy and empathy the legitimate aspiration of the Indian people to attain freedom from two centuries of colonial rule by Britain. But they were not willing to make an issue of the Indian demand for freedom with their key ally in Europe. The representations that FDR made to the British Prime Minister on the Indian problems were characterized by extraordinary caution and circumspection. The two letters of Roosevelt did not contain a trace of the Jeffersonian faith in the "inalienable right" of a people to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness", of the Wilsonian proclamation on the right of self-determination and of Roosevelt's own declarations on the "four freedoms" and the commitment of America to the cause of the "liberation of the subjugated peoples".<sup>27</sup>

It is obvious that American policy makers were not willing to go the extra mile on the matter of decolonization so as not to offend Winston Churchill, their main European ally during the war. A deeply ingrained American tradition that held sway until the end of the Second World War was that the United States should keep its "hands off" approach even in struggles for independence in other countries that clearly did not involve vital U.S. interests. This concept was implicit in the speeches and policy declarations of George Washington and John Quincy Adams in the early years of the American Republic. Franklin D. Roosevelt was a product of the same school. Roosevelt and his advisors acted in consonance with that tried and tested policy. Thus in the Indian situation they would have considered flexing some extra muscles towards India's independence even at the cost of incurring British unhappiness, if they had been convinced that America's vital national interests called for such a course. If on the other hand, reality at New Delhi convinced them that America's interests would be best served by cooperation and avoidance of confrontation with Britain, they would follow the course advocated by Britain. In addition one ought to remember the fact that Roosevelt had developed a love affair with the "British Empire". The "British Empire" connoted for Roosevelt stability and orderly progress in assorted backward areas. "We believe", he told reporters in a friendly chat on 18 April 1940, "that the British Empire, to a certain extent, has stood more nearly for the democratic way of life and has been less trouble to us than some of the new-fangled countries that believe in Nazism and Bolshevism".<sup>28</sup> He also overlooked Joseph Kennedy's warning that the United States might have to face the world without a strong British Empire.<sup>29</sup>

Wendell Wilkie, FDR's Republican rival in the 1940 Presidential election, exhorted the Administration in Washington to condemn British handling of the Indian nationalist crisis and Churchill's arrogant "First Minister" speech in which he bragged "not to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire" including India. FDR, on his part, was caught between idealism and pragmatism. Roosevelt had a shrewd sense of what might and might not be politically prudent and feasible and he refused to pursue an issue that would interfere with the allied war efforts, one of the crowning moments of his Presidency. Time and again in conversation, Roosevelt would dwell on the question of timetables for independence in India and in all other colonial areas and the need to speed up the process of decolonization the world over.<sup>30</sup> With Churchill at the helm of affairs in Britain and his fascination to "keep a bit of India for the empire" and America's longing for a solid Anglo-American relationship, FDR could not foresee the speedy tumbling down of the walls of decolonization in India in the immediate aftermath of the end of Second World War. The question of India's independence was later passed on to President Harry Truman, during whose term in office, India achieved independence in 1947 from the British Empire.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Rajendra Prasad, *Autobiography* (Bombay, 1957), p. 523; also, see *At the Feet of the Mahatma* (Bombay, 1961), p. 283; also see, B. K. Shrivastava and M. S. Venkatramani, *Quit India: The American Response to the 1942 Struggle* (Delhi, 1979) and *Roosevelt, Gandhi, Churchill: America and the Last Phase of India's Freedom Struggle* (Delhi, 1983) for a broader analysis.

- <sup>2</sup> Address by J. L. Nehru at the Waldorf-Astoria, New York City, 20 October 1949, excerpts in *Jawaharlal Nehru: Inside America* (New Delhi, 1941).
- <sup>3</sup> The Secretary of State (Cordell Hull) to the British Ambassador (Lord Halifax), 28 May 1941. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1941 (7 Vol. Washington, 1959), III, P. 171. This source will hereafter be cited as FR 1941.
- <sup>4</sup> Memorandum by the Asst. Secretary of State (A. A. Berle, Jr.), 5 May 1941, FR 1941, p. 176.
- <sup>5</sup> Memorandum by the Secretary of State of a conversation with the British Ambassador, 7 May 1941, p. 1.
- <sup>6</sup> The United States Ambassador in the United Kingdom (John Winant) to the Secretary of State, 1 August 1941, FR 1941, pp.8-9.
- <sup>7</sup> FR 1941, pp. 180-181.
- <sup>8</sup> The Ambassador in the United Kingdom to the Secretary of State, 4 November 1941, FR 1941, pp. 181-182. Also see: William, Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire* (New York, 1978).
- <sup>9</sup> FR 1941, p. 184. Memorandum from Murray to Welles.
- <sup>10</sup> Gary R. Hess, *America Encounters India* (Baltimore, 1971), p. 83-84.
- <sup>11</sup> Wells to Hull, 11 November 1941, FR 1941, pp.184-185. Also see; B. K. Shrivastava and M. S. Venkataramani; *ibid*.
- <sup>12</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War* ( 5 Vol; London, 1951), IV, p. 188.
- <sup>13</sup> President Roosevelt to Prime Minister Churchill, FR 1942, P. 615. Also see, John M. Blum, Ed. *The Price of Vision: the Diary of Henry Wallace* (Boston, 1973), p.89-91.
- <sup>14</sup> FR 1942, p. 615.
- <sup>15</sup> Memorandum of conversation with members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Breckenridge Long), the papers of Breckenridge Long, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington DC.
- <sup>16</sup> The Acting Secretary of State (Sumner Welles) to the U.S. Commissioner in New Delhi, (T. M. Wilson) 11 March 1942, FR 1942, pp. 617-618. Also see, R. J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps, and India*,( New York, 1979).
- <sup>17</sup> Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State (G. Howland Shaw) of a conversation with Colonel Louis A. Johnson, 11 March, 1942, FR 1942, p. 616.
- <sup>18</sup> *The Times* (London), 31 March 1942, p.4.
- <sup>19</sup> *The New York Times*, 30 March 1942, p. 6. *The Nation*, 4 April 1942, p. 381; *The New Republic*, CVI (6 April 1942), pp. 440-1, Reports of American Press Opinion in *The Hindu*, Madras, 1 April 1942, p. 20.
- <sup>20</sup> *The New York Times*, 31 March 1942, p. 20.
- <sup>21</sup> The Personal Representative of the President in India (Louis A. Johnson) to the Secretary of State , 4 April 1942, FR 1942, pp. 626-7.
- <sup>22</sup> Sumner Welles to Colonel Johnson, 5 April 1942, FR 1942, pp. 627-8.
- <sup>23</sup> Pattabhi Sitaramaya, *The History of Indian National Congress*, p. 318.
- <sup>24</sup> Johnson to Sumner Welles, 25 April 1942, FR 1942, pp. 643-4.
- <sup>25</sup> The Secretary of State to the Personal Representative of the President of India, "From the President for Colonel Johnson", 8 May 1942, FR 1942, p. 650.
- <sup>26</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins* (New York, 1950), p. 110.
- <sup>27</sup> State of the Union Address, Department of State Bulletin (Washington), VI, (January 1942), p. 40. Also see, M. S. Venkataramani, "The United States and the Indian National Movement", *India Abroad* (New York), 21 March 1997, p. 19.
- <sup>28</sup> 18 April 1940, Press Conference of FDR; microfilm. Also see, M. S. Venkataramani, *ibid*.

<sup>29</sup> The Ambassador in London (Joseph Kennedy) to the President, 30 September 1939, PSF, Kennedy Folder, Roosevelt Papers. The Ambassador in London.

<sup>30</sup> Memorandum by Charles Taussig, Joint Chairman, Anglo-American Caribbean Commission, 16 January 1945, Taussig Papers. Also see, William, Roger Louis, *ibid.* p.9.