

Topic 22

LORD WAVELL & THE SIMLA CONFERENCE 1945:

- In March 1944, Lord Wavell flew London to consult future policy of British Government in India.
- Wavell proposed that an **Executive Council** should be set up to govern India under the present constitution, until a new constitution could be agreed on.
- Wavell proposed that it would contain equal number of Muslims & Hindus & be entirely India. Apart from the viceroy & a member controlling defense.
- Wavell called a conference to discuss the proposals in Simla in June 1945.
- The conference had the leaders of Congress, the Muslim League, the Scheduled castes, Sikhs & other important groups.
- Jinnah, Iqbal, Ali Khan & Khwaja Nazimuddin led the league delegation. Gandhi led the congress group but president was Abul Kalam, to prove that congress was also representing Muslims.

CAUSES OF THE FAILURE OF SIMLA CONFERENCE:

- Jinnah pointed that as Sikhs & scheduled castes on the council are bound to vote with Hindu, which would mean a permanent Muslim minority in council.
- Jinnah also objected to the congress suggestion that it could also nominate Muslims & pointed that League had won every by-election for the last two years & was the undisputed voice of the Muslims.
- Lord Wavell could see no solution so closed the conference on 14 July.

Expected questions and answers:

Question no.1: was the Simla conference of 1945 the most important factor during the 1940s leading to the partition of the Sub continent in 1947? Give reasons for your answer. 14

June 2003 Q. 3 c

Question no.2: how successful were negotiations aimed at independence during 2nd w.w? Explain your answer. 14

Oct 2010 Q.4 c

Answer to question no. 1:

Simla conference of 1945 remained one of the important factors during 1940s to the partition of the sub-continent. The Viceroy Lord Wavell called the Simla Conference in *June 1945* just at the end of WW II. The viceroy wanted to establish an Executive Council in which all subjects excepted *defense* should be given to Indians. He proposed that equal number of Hindu & Muslim members would be included in the Executive Council. For the first time the important portfolios of foreign affairs, finance & the interior would be held by Indians. The congress objected to the idea of equal number of Hindus & Muslims & desired that one Muslim seat should be given to congress because there were many Muslims in the congress party.

Quaid-e-Azam took a firm stand & explained that Muslim League being the sole representative party of Muslims of India had the right to nominate all Muslim members. The conference failed on crucial point of method of selection. But it was clear that the point of *partition of India* was not on the agenda of the Simla Conference. The Simla conference ended without achieving anything.

On the other hand Lahore resolution remained the most important factor for the development of independence. Lahore Resolution of March 1940 clearly demanded contiguous Muslim majority provinces in the north west & east of India should be grouped together to form an independent Muslim state . Both the Hindus & the British opposed the partition of the sub-continent. But this resolution brought the Muslims of India under one banner & Pakistan became the objective, ambition & goal of the Muslim nation. The resolution increased the importance & popularity of ML. it also greatly added to the credibility & importance of Mr. Jinnah in Indian politics. ML became the true representative of the Muslims of India & Jinnah was the sole spokesman. Surprisingly great support came from the Muslims of minority provinces.

The cabinet Mission plan in March 1946 to find a solution for handing over power in India. After long negotiations the Mission gave its proposals which were accepted by ML. Congress accepted it with its own interpretations & later rejected the plan at which the ML withdrew its acceptance. The Cabinet Mission failed & went back. Mountbatten, the new Viceroy arrived in March 1947. He realized that the demand for partition cannot be ignored & chalked out a plan for the partition of the sub-continent. After getting it approved by the British government, Mountbatten announced the partition of India on 3rd June 1947. He fixed the date of 15th August 1947 for handing over power, announced the appointment of a boundary commission & the division of assets between India & Pakistan.

Briefly speaking from all the events of 1940s the Lahore resolution was the most important factor that led to the partition of the sub-continent. The resolution formed the basis of later decisions &



emerged as the only proper solution for the political problem of India after the departure of the British.

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