POLICY TO BE ADOPTED TOWARDS MR. GANDHI.

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for India.

As I mentioned to the War Cabinet on 15th June (War Cabinet Conclusions 74(42) Minute 3) there are increasing indications that Gandhi is abandoning his previously declared policy of refraining from embarrassing Government and is planning to lead Congress into some widespread movement with the aim of compelling the British to withdraw from India. I now circulate for information an extract from the Viceroy's telegram of 7th June and a copy of his telegram of 11th June (already circulated) together with a copy of the published Congress War Resolution of May 1st compared with the original draft (now established to be the work of Gandhi himself) and a selection of recent significant statements by Gandhi. A copy of the document referred to at the beginning of the Viceroy's telegram of 11th June will be circulated later when received.

So far it is uncertain what degree of support Gandhi may receive from Nehru (though in a recent utterance Gandhi says that he and Nehru have drawn closer together of late and the Viceroy has received reports that Nehru has given way to Gandhi's views), or from the Congress Working Committee which was in session last week. There has undoubtedly been a division of opinion in Congress circles but no evidence yet of a substantial breakaway from Gandhi's unofficial leadership. Nor is it clear what form the threatened movement will take: mass civil disobedience is suggested, which may be in the form of a no-tax campaign, or resistance to military measures in Eastern India (evacuation of villages, clearance of ground for aerodromes etc.). Whatever the actual plans may be, we must be prepared for a movement instigated by Gandhi to defy the law of the land, and incidentally to obstruct the war effort.

A further statement by Gandhi reported in the "Times" of 15th June bears on the surface a less sinister colour: it may however be no more than a deliberate diminuendo for the purpose of keeping matters from openly reaching the boiling point before the Working Committee of Congress meets at the beginning of July.

The Viceroy, while recognising the hold that Gandhi has won on world opinion, particularly in the U.S.A., sees that the time may be imminent when active measures will have to be taken to restrain Gandhi and Congress. He is anxious that the Cabinet should be aware beforehand of the situation which may develop shortly and which may involve repressive measures: even Gandhi cannot be permitted to flout the law of the land and must be treated like any other law-breaker, particularly if it is evident that his actions are directed to the frustration of our war effort in the East and to the undermining of our position in India.
As it is highly important that opinion (particularly in America) should not be taken by surprise if repressive measures are forced on us, I am taking steps to warn His Majesty's Representatives in Washington, Kuibyshev and Chungking and the United Kingdom High Commissioners in the Dominions, of the present situation and its possible outcome in a message which might be used as guidance to responsible Editors.

This memorandum is for the information only of the War Cabinet at the present stage, and is circulated in order that the background of possible developments may be readily available. It is not unlikely that early next month a decision of great importance may have to be taken and at short notice.

INDIA OFFICE,
16th June 1942.

L.S.A.

APENDIX I

Telegram from Government of India, Home Department, dated 7th June 1942.

Congress War Resolution of May 1st was based on Draft which we had reason to believe was Gandhi's. This has now been confirmed by search of Congress Office and seizure inter alia of most illuminating summary of Working Committee's discussion on the Draft Resolution. Summary shows that Gandhi's Draft was opposed by Nehru and others on the ground that it would be generally interpreted as definite line-up with the Axis Powers and identify Congress in the eyes of the world as their passive partner. Draft was therefore revised by Nehru and although voting originally went against his version, President finally succeeded in persuading Working Committee to accept it. Nehru made it clear that his opposition to Gandhi was not based on any desire to help the British Government and final Draft as published may fairly be regarded, against this background, as merely disguising what Gandhi wished to proclaim openly.

2. Since then Gandhi has shown clearly both by his writings in Harijan and also by what he said at secret interview with Congress Workers in Bombay, record of which has come into our hands, that he is either feeling his way or has decided to launch fresh civil disobedience movement. His motive presumably is to re-establish Congress prestige, which has been badly damaged by their failure with Cripps and by Rajagopalachari's defection, and more particularly to re-assert his own personal ascendancy. We have no definite information yet what form the movement will take nor what support he will succeed in getting either from Working Committee or from public, but we have more than one indication that he is in desperate mood. It is indeed possible that he may launch personal movement
if he cannot carry Working Committee with him, and present indications are that he will throw off all pretensions of non-embarrassment, declare himself openly anti-British, as indeed he has always been, and endeavour to organise mass movement based on exploitation of anti-British sentiment. Movement may start in threatened provinces by organised opposition to acquisition of lands for aerodromes etc., and evacuation of villages for military purposes. Slogans selected will almost certainly be connected with his plan for British withdrawal from India. So far he has not had a good press; there has been considerable criticism of his policy both from public men and even in Nationalist press; and it is clear that he and Nehru still do not see eye to eye. In accordance with his usual practice Gandhi has already made it clear that he will give us due notice of his intentions.

3. In all these circumstances it would be unwise for us to enter the arena at present. Any intervention on our part would merely stiffen Gandhi's attitude and might well rally present opponents or wavering to his cause. We therefore propose to wait and see. But we must have our plans ready and one matter that we consider of prime importance is that public opinion in England and even more in America should be prepared well in advance for any strong action we may eventually decide to take. We suggest that Press in England and important American correspondents should be taken into confidence with object of exposing Gandhi and Congress.

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Telegram from Viceroy dated 11th June, 1942.

1757.

Personal. I sent you by bag of June 2nd text of document seized from office of All-India Congress Committee during police search on May 26th, giving discussion on Gandhi's resolution for consideration of the committee. These papers are illuminating in a high degree and bring out forcibly not only various trends of opinion inside Working Committee but extent to which certain members of that body recognise that attitude taken by Gandhi admits of being represented as re-insurance against Japanese, or approximating to positive assistance to them in the event of invasion.

2. Much will depend, as I have always maintained, on progress of war and extent to which we are able to confront Left-wing Nationalist India and those elements of commerce and political which are anxious to re-insure, with victories in field in air or at sea, and so make them think again about possibility of victory for our enemies. I think I detect already, even in case of Gandhi himself, slight indication in his latest utterances in Harijan that he may feel a little less certain than he did as to ultimate outcome of war. I have no intention of allowing myself to be stampeded into a rush decision on line to be taken, and I am not unduly alarmed or disturbed by attitude of Congress or Gandhi's own machinations. But I think you will probably agree with me as to advantage of letting Cabinet see this very important document, for circumstances might arise in which were Gandhi to press his point of view and endeavour to get us in a corner, we might have to take drastic action against him, either by depriving him of his liberty, or, possibly, even by removing him from the country.
3. I have no intention of debating a hypothetical position by telegram. I would only comment that I appreciate to the full arguments against such action so long as it can be avoided. I realise in particular (as result of close contact with American correspondents here) the extent to which it would be open to misunderstanding and would be damaging to us in U.S.A., and fact that Gandhi's publicity value in that country is so great that there is very little that he could not hope to get away with even in face of argument that his policy was one likely to result in loss of American lives and in injury to American interests. There is not the least likelihood, in those circumstances, that I shall act in a hurry (or unless circumstances make it inevitable) at all; and in any event, I shall of course report anything I have in mind for consideration of Cabinet and yourself. If there are any points about which, when you have seen the Allahabad discussions, you would like to consult me further, I hope you will not fail to do so.

APPENDIX II.

All India Congress Committee War Resolution
May 1st, 1942.

In view of the imminent peril of invasion that confronts India, and the attitude of the British Government, as shown again in the recent proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps, the All India Congress Committee has to declare afresh India's policy and to advise the people in regard to the action to be undertaken in the emergencies that may arise in the immediate future.

The proposals of the British Government and their subsequent elucidation by Sir Stafford Cripps have led to greater bitterness and distrust of that Government and the spirit of non-cooperation with Britain has grown. They have demonstrated that even in this hour of danger, not only to India but to the cause of the United Nations, the British Government functions as an imperialist government and refused to recognise the independence of India or to part with any real power. India's...
participation in the war was a purely British act imposed upon the Indian people without the consent of their representatives. While India has no quarrel with the people of any country, she has repeatedly declared her antipathy to Nazism and Fascism as to imperialism. If India were free she would have determined her own policy and might have kept out of the war, though her sympathies would, in any event, have been with the victims of aggression. If, however, circumstances had led her to join the war, she would have done so as a free country fighting for freedom, and her defence would have been organised on a popular basis with a national army under national control and leadership, and with intimate contacts with the people. A free India would know how to defend herself in the event of any aggressor attacking her. The present Indian Army is in fact an offshoot of the British army and has been maintained till now mainly to hold India in subjection. It has been completely segregated from the general population, who can in no sense regard it as their own.

The essential difference between the imperialist and the popular conceptions of defence is demonstrated by the fact that while foreign armies are invited to India for that defence, the vast manpower of India herself is not utilised for the purpose. India's past experience teaches her that it is harmful to her interest and dangerous to the cause of her freedom to introduce foreign armies in India. It is significant and extraordinary that India's inexhaustible manpower should remain untapped, while India develops into a battleground between foreign armies fighting on her soil or on her frontiers, and her defence is not supposed to be a subject fit for popular control. India resents this treatment of her people as chattels to be disposed of by foreign authority.

The A.I.C.C. is therefore of opinion that the British should withdraw from India. The plea that they should remain in India for protecting the Indian Princes is wholly untenable. It is additional proof of their determination to maintain their hold over India. The Princes need have no fear from unarmed India.

The question of majority and minority is a creation of the British Government and would disappear on their withdrawal.

For all these reasons the Committee appeals to Britain, for the sake of her own security, for the sake of India's safety and for the cause of world peace to let go her hold on India even if she does not give up all Asiatic and African possessions.

This Committee desires to assure the Japanese Government and people that India bears no enmity either towards Japan or towards any other nation. India only desires freedom from all alien domination. But in this fight for freedom the Committee is of opinion that India while welcoming universal sympathy does not stand in need of foreign military aid. India will attain her freedom through her non-violent strength and will retain it likewise. Therefore the Committee hopes that Japan will not
The A.I.C.C. is convinced that India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. The present crisis, as well as the experience of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, makes it impossible for the Congress to consider any schemes or proposals which retain, even in a partial measure, British control and authority in India. Not only the interests of India but also Britain's safety, and world peace and freedom demand that Britain must abandon her hold on India. It is on the basis of independence alone that India can deal with Britain or other nations.

The Committee repudiates the idea that freedom can come to India through interference or invasion by any foreign nation, whatever the professions of that nation may be. In case an invasion takes place, it must be resisted. Such resistance can only take the form of non-violent non-cooperation as the British Government has prevented the organisation of national defence by the people in any other way. The Committee would therefore expect efforts to resist him, the people of India to offer complete non-violent non-cooperation to the invading forces and not render any assistance to them. It is no part of the duty of those who are attacked to render any assistance to the attacker. It is their duty to offer complete non-cooperation.

It is not difficult to understand the simple principle of non-violent non-cooperation:

1. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor or obey any of his orders.
2. We may not look to him for any favours nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice nor wish him ill.
3. If he wishes to take possession of our homes and our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist him.
4. If he is attacked by the invading forces and disease or is dying of thirst we may not refuse to help him.
5. In such places where the British and Japanese forces are fighting our non-cooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. At present our non-cooperation with the British Government is limited. We may not assist the British in any active manner. If we can judge from their recent attitude, the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference.
to the invader will largely depend on the intensive working out of the Congress constructive programme and more especially the programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection in all parts of the country.

from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help only as slaves.

It is not necessary for the Committee to make a clear declaration in regard to the scorched earth policy. If, in spite of our non-violent resistance, any part of the country falls into Japanese hands we may not destroy our crops, water supply, etc., if only because it will be our endeavour to regain them. The destruction of war material is another matter and may under certain circumstances be a military necessity. But it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs to or is of use to the masses.

Whilst non-cooperation against the Japanese forces will necessarily be limited to a comparatively small number and must succeed if it is complete and genuine, the true building up of swaraj consists in the millions of India wholeheartedly working the constructive programme. Without it the whole nation cannot rise from its age-long torpor. Whether the British remain or not it is our duty always to wipe out unemployment, to bridge the gulf between rich and poor, to banish communal strife, to exorcise the demon of untouchability, to reform dacoits and save the people from them. If crores of people do not take a living interest in this nation-building work, freedom must remain a dream and unattainable by either non-violence or violence.

Foreign soldiers. The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that it is harmful to India's interests and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers in India. It therefore appeals to the British Government to remove these foreign legions and henceforth stop further introduction. It is a crying shame to bring foreign troops in spite of India's inexhaustible man-power and is a proof of the immorality that British Imperialism is.
APPENDIX III.

Recent utterances of Gandhi.

Harijan: April 26th. American aid amounts in the end to American influence if not to American rule added to British...In the British left India to her fate as they had to leave Singapore, non-violent India would not lose anything. Probably the Japanese would leave India alone...... Whatever the consequences to India, the real safety of India and Britain lies in the orderly and timely British withdrawal from India.

Harijan: May 3rd. I feel convinced that the presence of the British is the incentive for Japanese attack. If the British wisely decided to withdraw and leave India to manage her own affairs the Japanese would be bound to reconsider their plans. The very novelty of the British stroke will confound the Japanese....

Harijan: May 10th This drastic disease (racial superiority) requires a drastic remedy - the complete and immediate orderly withdrawal from India....The presence of the British in India is an invitation to Japan to invade India. Their withdrawal removes the bait.

Press interview: May 15th Line of any move will be to advise the British to leave the country, and if they do not do so to force them to go by non-co-operation or by civil disobedience or it may be by both...Satyagraha could not at this time be individual but must be mass satyagraha, demanding the British to withdraw forthwith...Anarchy is the only way. Someone asked me if there would be anarchy after the British go. Yes, it will be there, but I tell the British to give us chaos...The fight had not yet begun and it would take another two months for me to launch it.

Press interview: May 16th I am watching and trying, if I am allowed, to educate public opinion about my demand for the withdrawal of the British from India.

Harijan: May 24th ...British rule in India in any shape or form must end. Hitherto the rulers have said "We would gladly retire if we know to whom we should hand over". My answer now is, leave India to God. If that is too much, then leave her to anarchists...I wish all conflicting elements and interests will make a combined effort to rid India of foreign domination.

Reuters
There are many plans floating in my brain. My first task is to educate the public mind in India and world opinion in so far as I am allowed to do so, and when I have finished that to my satisfaction I may have to do something. That something may be very big, if Congress and the people are with me.

What do Government expect from repressive policy? Trifling act of forfeiture of "National Herald" security, arrest of Rafi Ahmad Kidwai ex-minister, and wanton and almost indecent search of All-India Congress Committee Office is in my opinion great hindrance to national war effort. It is so mad as to amount to invitation to Japanese to walk into India. "It is a justification for my friendly invitation to foreign government to abdicate in favour of national whatever it may be". Let British take risk of abdication and it will be their greatest war effort. It alone can save situation, if anything can, so far as India is concerned. As first step let them revoke forfeiture order, discharge Rafi Sahib, and return papers seized from All-India Congress Committee.

In answer to question whether anarchy resulting from Gandhi's policy may not be worse than "present anarchy", Gandhi is reported to have said: I waited until country should develop non-violent strength necessary to throw off foreign yoke. But my attitude has now undergone change. I feel I cannot afford to wait for I may be enveloped and overwhelmed by the flames that threaten all of us. That is why I have decided that even at certain obvious risks I must ask people to resist slavery. I am sure that the anarchy that may result from British withdrawal or their refusal to listen to us and our decision to defy their authority will in no way be worse than present ordered anarchy around us. After all, those who are unarmed cannot produce frightful amount of violence and anarchy, and I have faith that out of that anarchy may arise pure non-violence. But I cannot be passive witness of terrible violence and anarchy that is going on in the name of resisting possible foreign aggression.