Cooperation with Other Governments: United Nations' India
OFFICE OF THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

New Delhi, India
April 10, 1944

Subject: Declaration of Policy by the Government of India Similar to That Made by the President of the United States Regarding the Rescue and Relief of European Refugees

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's Circular Airmail of February 28, 1944 and to my despatch No. 406 of March 22, 1944 on the subject "Accommodation in India of War Refugees and Policy of the Government of India Toward Further Immigrations of Such Refugees".

While the Mission sees no objection to addressing the Government of India again, in the sense of paragraphs three and four of the circular airmail under reference, it believes that it should not suggest to the Government of India the issuance by that Government of a declaration of policy similar to that made by the President of the United States without asking the Department whether such a suggestion would be timely in view of the statement of policy contained in the Government of India's letter to the Mission dated March 22, 1944, a copy of which was transmitted with my despatch No. 406 above mentioned. It will be recalled that the Government of India stated in that letter that India's refugee problem is probably greater than that of any other allied or neutral country and that, in the light of the present food and accommodation problems and the general economic situation in India, it does not feel that it is in a position to accept more refugees from elsewhere.

It occurs to the Mission, however, that a communication might be addressed to the Government of India referring to the statement in its letter of March 22 that "there is the possibility of a further liability for 8,000 additional Poles" and inquiring whether, in case the liability for 8,000 Poles does not materialize, the Government of India would be prepared to accommodate a similar number of other European refugees.

Respectfully yours,

[Signature]

George B. Morrell
Secretary in Charge
No. 404

Subject: Accommodation in India of War Refugees and Policy of the Government of India toward further Immigration of such Refugees.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Jir:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's circular airgram of January 26, 1944, 7 p.m., in regard to the intention of the United States Government to take all measures within its power to rescue Jewish and other persecuted minorities who are in imminent danger of death at the hands of the enemy.

With particular reference to the instructions contained in paragraph 4 of the airgram under reference, an officer of the Mission took up this matter with an officer of the External Affairs Department of the Government of India on February 21, 1944 and, in confirmation of that conversation, sent an aide memoire of the same date, copy of which is attached. On March 23, my note No. 60, copy of which is attached, was sent to the External Affairs Department stressing the desire of the United States Government to receive a reply as soon as possible.

The reply of the Government of India has now been received, a copy of which together with its enclosure is attached. The enclosure gives the numbers of refugees of each nationality which have been given haven in India. The approximately 500,000 persons of British and British protected nationality were evacuated principally from the British colonies in South East Asia and from China. Apart from these war refugees accommodated in India consist of 3552 Poles and a scattering of Europeans of various nationalities. Clarifying a statement in paragraph one of its letter that "there is the possibility of a further liability of 6000 additional Poles," the External Affairs Department states that the Government of India has been advised that it may be asked to accommodate such a number but that there is nothing definite about it as yet.
In the second paragraph of its letter the Government of India states that "India's refugee problem is probably greater than that of any other allied or neutral country, and in the light of the present food and accommodation problems and the general economic situation in this country, the Government of India feel that, despite the utmost goodwill, they are not in a position to accept more refugees from elsewhere." As used here, "elsewhere" refers particularly to Europe; the Government of India anticipates that "the advance of Allied armies into Burma may well result in an increased flow of refugees from Burma into India."

Respectfully yours,

George R. Pearl
Secretary in Charge

Enclosures:
1. Copy of Aide Memoire Feb. 21, 1944
2. Copy of Note No. 60 Mar. 22, 1944
3. Copy of letter from External Affairs Department Mar. 28, 1944
Enclosure No. 1 to despatch No. 404
dated March 30, 1944, on the subject
"Accommodation of War Refugees and
Policy of the Government of India toward
Further Immigration of such Refugees," from
George R. Merrell, Secretary in Charge,
American Mission, New Delhi, India.

AIDE-MEMOIRE

There is enclosed a copy of an executive order
issued by the President of the United States on January
22, 1944, regarding the establishment of a War Refugee
Board to effectuate the United States Government's
intention to take all measures within its power to rescue
Jewish and other persecuted minorities who are in imminent
danger of death at the hands of the enemy.

In this connection, information as to the approximate
number of refugees of the several races and nationalities
which have been given haven in India would be appreciated.
It would also be helpful to know to what extent such
refugees have recently immigrated to India or have been
accommodated in India while en route elsewhere. An ex-
pression of the Government of India's attitude toward
immigration into India of such refugees, and an indica-
tion to what extent the Government of India would be able
to cooperate in an effort to rescue these persecuted
minorities would be most welcome.

J. P. S.

New Delhi,
February 21, 1944
No. 60
March 22, 1944

The Secretary to the Government of India
in the External Affairs Department,
New Delhi.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Mission's aide-memoire dated February 21, 1944 and initialled "J.P.S." which confirmed a conversation between Mr. Speer of the Mission and Captain Fry of the External Affairs Department regarding the extent to which Jewish and other persecuted minorities have been given haven in India. An expression of the Government of India's attitude toward immigration into India of such refugees and an indication to what extent the Government of India would be able to cooperate in an effort to rescue these persecuted minorities were also requested.

In as much as my government is most anxious to have the benefit of the information above described, I should greatly appreciate an indication as to when the Mission may expect to receive a reply to the questions raised in the aide-memoire under reference.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

George R. Merrell
Secretary in Charge
From
The Secretary to the Government of India in the
External Affairs Department,

To
The Secretary in charge of the office of the
Personal Representative of the President of
the United States of America to India,
New Delhi.

Dated New Delhi, the 28th March 1944.

Subject: Refugees in India.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to your letter No. 60, dated
the 22nd March 1944, and to enclose a statement showing
the approximate number of refugees, with their nationali-
ties, who have been given refuge in India since the out-
break of hostilities. In addition there is the possibility
of a further liability for 6,000 additional Poles, while
the advance of the Allied armies into Burma may well result
in a renewed flow of refugees from Burma into India.

2. India's refugee problem is probably greater than that
of any other allied or neutral country, and in the light of
the present food and accommodation problems and the general
economic situation in this country, the Government of India
feel that, despite the utmost goodwill, they are not in a
position to accept more refugees from elsewhere.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

S. Easan

for Secretary to the Government of India
STA. GENT SHOWING THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER AND NATIONALITY OF REFUGEES WHO HAVE BEEN GIVEN REFUGE IN INDIA SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF THE PRESENT HOSTILITIES.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British or British protected</td>
<td>506,991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danish</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>3,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslav</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austrian</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese (British by marriage)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanese</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwegian</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Jew</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German (British by marriage)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finn</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian (British naturalised)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| German                                         | 2      |

Total                                           | 510,874|
New Delhi, India

March 23, 1944

Subject: Standing Finance Committee of the Indian Legislative Assembly Approves Payment of Indian quota for Inter-Governmental Relief Committee.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that on March 18, 1944, the Standing Finance Committee of the Indian Legislative Assembly, under the chairmanship of the Finance Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council (Sir Jorey RAJMAN), approved a proposal to pay India's contribution towards the administrative expenses of the Inter-Governmental Relief Committee which was set up in 1939. The invitation to India to become a Member-Government has been accepted subject to approval by the Legislative Assembly. The approval by the Standing Finance Committee is the first step towards that end. India's share of the administrative expenses of the Committee, it is stated, has been estimated at £2,700 per annum but its quota for the first sixteen months (September 1943 to December 1944) will be only £2,176.

An unofficial note on the subject issued by the Principal Information Officer of the Government of India comments on India's connection with the Committee as follows:

"Under present arrangements, the work of the organization in the case of India affects only refugees from the Balkans, Russia and Turkey. Until the scope of the Committee's operation is extended to areas from which there has been a substantial movement of India's nationals, it is not proposed that India should take any further active interest in the Committee.

"The Committee is required to work in collaboration with the U.N.R.R.A., whose functions are wider than those of the former, as they relate to post-war international economic reconstruction as opposed to assistance to refugees which is the function of the Committee."

In
In this connection reference is made to the Department's circular airgram of January 26, 7 p.m., with respect to the executive order of the President of January 22, 1944, regarding the establishment of a War Refugee Board to take all measures possible to rescue Jewish and other persecuted minorities who are in imminent danger of death at the hands of the enemy. On February 21, 1944, the Mission made inquiry as to the action and intentions of the Government of India with respect to aid to such refugees. A reply has not been received and further inquiry is being made. From the statement quoted above, however, it appears that the Government of India intends to limit its assistance in this respect to the payment of India's share of the administrative expenses of the Inter-Governmental Relief Committee.

Respectfully yours,

George R. Herrell
Secretary in Charge

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THE/30

Copies to: American Consul General, Calcutta
American Consul, Bombay

(To Department in original and hectograph)
Secretary of State,  
Washington.

A-26, February 23, 9 a.m.

Reference: Department's circular airmogram of January 26, 1944, 7 p.m. (received by mail from Mission at New Delhi), concerning the immediate rescue and relief of the Jews of Europe and other victims of enemy persecution.

There are no destitute Jews or other persecuted minorities from Europe asylum in this consular district.

Questions concerning entry of such new refugees falls within jurisdiction of Indian Government at New Delhi and Provincial Governments of this consular district would undoubtedly cooperate fully with Indian Government policy (presumably covered by Mission's report). This consular district and particularly Province of Bengal not considered suitable location for refugees from Europe because of famine of 1943, its aftermath of epidemics of contagious and infectious diseases such as smallpox, cholera and malaria; and the possibility of similar situation during 1944.

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OIP/amt

Copies to: Mission, New Delhi.
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Mission, New Delhi
DATED: February 12, 1944, 5 p.m.
NUMBER: 110

It is felt by FEA and the Department that with respect to the Indian requirements of drugs and medical supplies the Mission should undertake the following course of action.

1. It should inform the Government of India that this Government will make available desired medicinals for cash purchase in so far as possible.

2. There should be submitted to Washington as soon as possible a comprehensive list of required drugs and medical supplies, by type and amount.

3. The authorities of India should be requested to arrange with London the necessary clearances for importation of medicinals.

4. Representation should be made to the Indian Government that since this contemplated supply of drugs is considered by the Department as an emergency measure, assurance is desired that normal trade outlets of American firms will be given an equitable opportunity to carry on established trade in so far as possible at this time and in the future.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date, SEP 13 1972 5, Complaints
5. Complaints of American drug firms' agents in India should be brought to the Indian Government's attention in the Mission's discretion.

The Mission is confidentially informed that WSA has advised the Department that shortage of shipping should not be considered an obstacle, since shipping can be made available.

Foregoing message was repeated as the Department's no. 1089 to London.

STETTINIUS
Acting