

Cooperation with Other Governments: United Nations: India

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OFFICE OF THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

No. 436

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 Airgram of February 29, 1944 and to my
despatch No. 404 of March 30, 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 para-
graphs three and four of the circular airgram 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 28, 1944, a copy of which was transmitted with my
despatch No. 404 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 28 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,

George R. Merrell
Secretary in Charge

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OFFICE OF THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

New Delhi

March 30, 1944

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.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's circular airgram of January 28, 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 22, 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 8000 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.

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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. Merrell
Secretary in Charge

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✓ 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, the subject "Accommodation in India 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 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 would be most welcome.

J. P. S.

New Delhi,
February 21, 1944

Enclosure No. 2 to despatch No. 404
dated March 30, 1944 on the subject
"Accommodation in India of War Refugees
and Policy of the Government of India
toward further immigration of such
refugees," from George R. Merrell, Secre-
tary in Charge, American Mission, New
Delhi, India.

New Delhi

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

Enclosure No. 3 to despatch No. 404
dated March 30, 1944, on the subject
"Accommodation in India 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.

No. 29-W/44

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 8,000 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. Hasan

for Secretary to the Government of India

STATEMENT SHOWING THE APPROXIMATE
NUMBER AND NATIONALITY OF REFUGEES WHO
HAVE BEEN GIVEN REFUGE IN INDIA SINCE
THE OUTBREAK OF THE PRESENT HOSTILITIES.

Nationality	Number
British or British protected	506,991
Danish	20
Dutch	45
Polish	3,552
Hungarian	5
Czech	33
Russian	24
American	95
Portuguese	4
French	38
Latvian	1
Spanish	1
Yugoslav	3
Austrian	5
Japanese (British by marriage)	1
Lebanese	1
Swiss	18
Norwegian	5
Greek	8
Swedish	8
German Jew	3
German (British by marriage)	2
Finn	3
Philippino	5
Italian (British naturalised)	1
German	2
Total	<u>510,874</u>

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OFFICE OF THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

5-War Refugees Bd.
(Mr. Pahlke)

New Delhi, India

No. 394

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 Jeremy RAISMAN), 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 £1,176.

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 move 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."

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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. Merrell
Secretary in Charge

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

(To Department in original and hectograph)

2 War Refugee
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AIRGRAM

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FROM

Calcutta

Dated February 23, 1944.

Rec'd

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Secretary of State,
Washington.

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

Reference: Department's circular airgram 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 asylosed this consular district.

Questions concerning entry of such war 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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Copies to: Mission, New Delhi.
American Embassy, London.

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*War Relief
Control Bd*

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

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FO 538 1011
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M.O: MEXICAN AFFAIRS
SECRETARIA OF STATE
BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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.

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