

Jinnah's Pakistan, Hodson and the Letter to Nawab Ismail

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Abstract

Muhammad Ali Jinnah called for the division of India on 22nd March 1940 in his presidential address to the annual session of the All-India Muslim League held at Lahore. Immediately, the League were beset with not only opposition from all flanks but also the allegation that Jinnah's idea of Pakistan was ill-defined and merely a counter for bargaining. Even after Pakistan's independence in 1947, this theory was furthered to the extent of being elevated to orthodoxy. This paper examines Jinnah's private correspondence dealing with the nature of Pakistan, in particular Jinnah's 1941 letter to the League leader Nawab Ismail that refers to findings of the Reforms Commissioner H.V. Hodson regarding Pakistan, and is often cited as evidence of Jinnah's 'real aims'. In parallel, Jinnah and prominent League leaders' dealings with the British are analyzed in order to reconcile their disparate stances.

Key Words: Jinnah, Hodson, Nawab Ismail, Partition

Introduction

It is not known exactly when Jinnah's mind was captured by the idea of Pakistan as a separate independent state. In his own words, he knew about the Pakistan scheme from 'young fellows in London', a reference to Rahmat Ali and his cohorts (Pirzada, 1970, p. 426). Jinnah also stated that he first got a vision of 'Pakistan' in 1930 (Quaid-i-Azam Papers, F. 1067, p. 10). Dr. Muhammad Iqbal's letters to him in 1937 no doubt gave him an insight into Iqbal's justification for a separate Muslim state (Alam, 1956, pp. 18-19), and Jinnah himself pushes the date further back, stating that the two had a 'communion of views' since 1929 (Quaid-i-Azam Papers, F. 1092, p. 250). After the Congress victory in the 1937 provincial elections, its leaders adopted a hard line towards coalition governments, signaled

political interference in provinces, and initiated Muslim Mass-Contact Programmes earning not only the ire of Jinnah but a shift of Muslim premiers of Punjab, Bengal, and Assam to the League camp (Sayeed, 1968/2019, pp. 88-96). This also increased the Muslim interest in 'Pakistan' with a wide variety of schemes ranging from All-India federation with a common center to separate Muslim federation or federations (Sayeed, 1968/2019, pp. 112-3), pouring in for the Muslim League to consider. Sindh Provincial League Conference of October 1938, presided by Jinnah, passed a resolution urging the Muslim League to 'devise a scheme of Constitution under which Muslims may attain full independence' (Khan, 1944, p. 82). According to M. A. Khuhro, Jinnah, in

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November 1938, instructed Haji Abdullah Haroon, one of the writers of the aforementioned resolution, to collect material to prepare the Pakistan demand in case no settlement with Hindus was forthcoming ([Dani, 1981, p. 170](#)). While the above serves as a useful prelude to the Lahore Resolution where 'independent states' were demanded, it is also the juncture at which seemingly contradictory statements, both public and private, start coming from Jinnah regarding the partition of India. It is these very statements that gave rise to the theory that Jinnah's Pakistan was a 'counter for bargaining', and it has now reached a level of orthodoxy where the other explanations regarding Jinnah's motivation for the Pakistan demand pale in comparison (Dhulipila, 2015, p. 7). [Jalal \(1985, p. 71\)](#) apparently found a way to solve this riddle and brought to the fore what can be called perhaps the most potent argument in favor of the 'counter for bargaining' theory. It is Jinnah's 25th November 1941 letter to Nawab Ismail, a senior Muslim League leader, whereby Jinnah's reference to Reforms Commissioner Henry Vincent Hodson having a good idea about their views is deemed as clear proof that Jinnah envisaged Pakistan to be within an All-India Center and not an independent country.

Nawab Ismail and H. V. Hodson

To delve into the matter in detail, we must first see the small chain of letters exchanged between Ismail and Jinnah preceding the one in question.

On 3rd November 1941, Nawab Ismail wrote a personal letter to Jinnah in his 'bad handwriting' so as to keep it confidential, even from his stenographer (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 17, pp. 266-7). At the very end of a highly apologetic letter, he asks Jinnah to send him in writing the principles of Pakistan which Jinnah had explained to him at a conference. Jinnah replied on 15th November 1941, stating that we 'cannot commit ourselves definitely yet, beyond the Lahore Resolution, and in our conference also we discussed the principles embodied in the Lahore Resolution. So far as the principles are concerned, they are very clearly defined in the Lahore Resolution, and I think most of us understand them, and so is the case with our opponents' (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 17, p. 291).

Unsatisfied, Ismail wrote again on 20th November 1941, stating that his question was for 'personal guidance and not for public reference.' 'This is a very important matter,' Ismail wrote, 'I seek immediate guidance so that the talk you had with Hodson, Reforms Commissioner, Government of India, shall be my guide for my talk with him. H. E. Sir Thomas Stewart (Governor of Bihar) has asked my consent to meet him and to discuss with him problems connected with the future constitution of India'. Ismail continued: 'While we of the Muslim League do adhere [to] and stand by the Lahore Resolution and its implication, I do feel that some brief instruction from you is immediately required to convey the impression on the lines in which you discussed matters with him. Of course, we have to abide by your orders and insist on your demand. It is with a view to keep[ing] you acquainted and seek[ing] your guidance that I am giving you this trouble'. Ismail then reminds Jinnah that Hodson would reach Patna on 5th December and the meeting would be on 6th, therefore if Jinnah could send his reply before that (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 17, p. 304).

Jinnah's reply, which forms the crux of Jalal's argument in 'The Sole Spokesman,' comes on 25th November. It is exasperated from the start. 'I have already written to you,' Jinnah writes, 'And explained to you the situation that we stand by the Lahore Resolution and it is quite clear to every man, who understands the constitutional problems of India, and also to every intelligent man if he applies his mind and tries to understand it. Jinnah continues: 'I cannot say anything more because it is liable to be misunderstood and misrepresented especially at present. I think Mr. Hodson fully understands as to what our demand is' (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 17, p. 313). With that, the exchange of letters concludes.

[Jalal \(1985, p. 71\)](#) remarks on the final line that it revealed more about Jinnah than 'thousand pages of research and propaganda.' She states that Jinnah's refusal to say 'anything more' was his admission that he could not come out with 'these truths' as they would be 'likely to be misunderstood. 'These truths,' according to Jalal, echo Chundrigar's comment of April 1940 that Pakistan was not out to 'destroy the unity of India.' The meaning is clear:

Jinnah did not envisage Pakistan outside of India but rather within it.

'Pakistan' and Partition: the Initial Phase

To understand this letter of Jinnah, we must first see how his views regarding partition and the popular idea of Pakistan evolved into the Lahore Resolution. After the aforementioned November 1938 gathering narrated by Khuhro, the next connection of Jinnah with 'Pakistan' comes from [Khan \(1970, Vol. 1, pp. 725-6\)](#), where he describes lunch at Dr. Sir Ziauddin's residence on 1st March 1939. A debate on Pakistan began where Jinnah wondered why it couldn't be made the creed of the Muslim League to bring about an 'understanding with the Congress' and without this creed 'we will have no pressure to exert on the Congress'. No other persons mentioned in the lunch, including Sir Zafrulla Khan, Sayyid Muhammad Husain, the host, or indeed Jinnah, have ever made a reference to either this gathering or this quote. Still, if they are believed to be authentic words of Jinnah, they showed that he initially saw the Pakistan demand, of whatever conception, as a powerful counter for bargaining.

In July 1939, he issued a statement criticizing Gandhi's reported desire to accept the federal scheme of the British by invoking the word 'Pakistan' for the first time in public and equating it to the destruction of All-India unity. He also equated these both with a partition ([The Mail \(Madras\), 31st July 1939](#)). However, on 4th September 1939, Jinnah informed the Viceroy in a private meeting of the partition of India as a solution to India's political impasse and an explanation of his earlier comment of not believing in a democratic government in India (Glendevon, 1971, p. 138). Linlithgow dismissed that rather quickly, but Jinnah clearly meant that if a country could not be run by democracy due to a domineering majority, it should be partitioned so that the new countries could be run democratically. However, in the same month, Jinnah stated publicly that he still remained a nationalist and had always believed in a Hindu-Muslim pact. While he didn't see much light at present, he could never say when the two communities would unite ([Khan, 1940](#), p. 6). On 1st January 1940, Jinnah wrote to Gandhi urging him to 'deliver the goods and use his 'good

offices to bring about a Hindu-Muslim settlement ([Khan, 1940, pp. 65-6](#)). These speeches and statements were published officially by the League in a pamphlet issued under Liaquat Ali Khan's name in early 1940 titled 'The WThe problemblem of India's Future Constitution: What Muslim India and its Leader M. A. Jinnah think'. Jinnah's better-known 9th January 1940 article in 'Time and Tide' magazine continued in the same vein. It called a single constituent assembly 'nebulous' and 'impracticable' but went on to express hope that a constitution may be framed in which the two nations share the governance of their common motherland ([Ahmad, 1992, Vol. 1, p. 479](#)). On 2nd February 1940, Sikandar Hayat Khan was told by Jinnah that he was out for complete partition (Telegram from Viceroy to S/S dated 3rd February 1940, Mss Eur F 125/19). Similarly, on 13th March 1940, Jinnah informed the Viceroy again that he was not left with any other choice but to fall back on some sort of partition (Telegram from Viceroy to S/S dated 16th March 1940, Mss Eur F 125/19). Thus, on the eve of the Lahore Resolution 'Pakistan' meant both partition and its opposite.

Jinnah's Attitude to Various Conceptions of Lahore Resolution

After the Lahore Resolution, Jinnah at times tolerated the resolution as conceptualized within an All-India center, while at other times, this earned a sharp rebuke. On 10th April 1940, M. M. S Isphani wrote to Jinnah where he talked about asking I. I. Chundrigar to write a note on Lahore Resolution for a 19th April meeting where the resolution would be explained (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 15, p. 259). Isphani attached a draft of it with the letter. However, Jinnah never replied to this. Chundrigar had stated that Pakistan sought equality with the majority and would not be against the unity of India. Honorary Secretary of the Ajmer Muslim League informed Jinnah on 28th April 1940 that they conceived of Pakistan as a confederation with Hindustan with treaties for the defense of one country (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 15, p. 304). Again Jinnah made no comment. On 5th September 1940, Jinnah sent Linlithgow Resolution No. 2 of the Working Committee of the Muslim League. It talked of the division of the subcontinent,

independent States, and partition, all embodied in the Lahore Resolution (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 16, pp. 10-11).

Nawab of Chhatari had written to Jinnah in October 1940 about some misgivings he was having regarding the Lahore Resolution. Jinnah wrote to him and told him categorically that the resolution meant the division of India deeming a single future constitution with India as improbable (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 15, p. 92). This wasn't confined to Muslims only. Desmond Boyle asked Jinnah's views on confederation after the former had been supplied a booklet by the latter, to which Jinnah replied that he should read the Lahore Resolution again as well as the booklet (the aforementioned booklet from early 1940 published by the League). (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 15, p. 149 and 166). Jinnah's correspondence with S. A. Latif during October 1940 is also worth noting. He tells Latif that his scheme of confederation was fundamentally different from Lahore Resolution (without Latif asking him to comment). Jinnah stated that he had also tried to explain it to him before in September (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 16, p. 73 and 80).

Jinnah also appreciated further justifications for the partition of India that were apprised to him. One such example is of Hassan Suhrawardy (Muslim member Secretary of State's Council of Advisers), who supported partition through examples of partition elsewhere around the world. Jinnah wrote back, pleased with Suhrawardy's 'various points' regarding the subject (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 15, p. 334 and 370). Abdus Sadeque, Professor of Economics and Politics at Islamia College Calcutta, sent Jinnah a scheme on how to implement partition proposals of Lahore Resolution. These were acknowledged by Jinnah (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 15, p. 454). Jamaluddin Ahmad, Lecturer of English at Aligarh, wrote to Jinnah after the Lahore Resolution was passed, complaining of the attitude of some Aligarh professors against separate Muslim states. Jinnah asked him to be patient (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 15, p. 335) and to write an article on Lahore Resolution himself (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 15, p. 347). Jamaluddin asked Jinnah for some data to show how proposed Muslim states would be economically self-sufficient, to which Jinnah referred some names to consult (Jinnah

Papers, Vol. 15, p. 383). Later, Jamaluddin sent him the required article, and its content earned Jinnah's approval (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 15, p. 681).

In a highly significant letter dated 16th January 1941, Jinnah wrote to Liaquat Ali Khan stating that Pakistan was 'beginning to assume a serious aspect. It had penetrated very deep except for the few top men amongst us, who are still an obstacle in the way. But the caravan is moving fast and steadily' (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 16, p. 210). Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan had been very vocal against the Pakistan scheme in those days for its advocacy of partition. Perhaps the 'top men among us' refers to him and others of the same view. After all, it was only a few months later that he openly denounced ownership of the Lahore Resolution in the Punjab Legislative Assembly (Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates 1941, Vol. XVI, pp. 350-6).

Jinnah informed Jam Saheb of Nawanagar on 21st March 1941 in explaining the Lahore Resolution that Muslim federation would have a direct connection with Britain for some time and no central government with Hindustan (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 16, p. 378). This perhaps explains what the word 'finally' meant in Lahore Resolution, in line with what the League leaders told Hodson that Britain would have to assume defensive responsibilities for a transition period. Jinnah's letter to Syed Badshah Hussain of 13th September 1941 described how the Lahore Resolution contemplated framing of a scheme of a future constitution of India, which was still under consideration. With this ambiguous reply, Jinnah excused himself from contributing an article on this topic to Hussain (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 17, p. 164). Jinnah wrote to Ghulam Ali Ghulam Hussain on 11th October 1941 and provided a message for their monthly magazine. In this message, he mentioned that the problem between Hindu India and Muslim India was of an international nature and called for division (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 17, p. 237).

Jinnah's private correspondence till November 1941 when he wrote the letter to Nawab Ismail, thus, does not in any way reconcile the incongruities in his approach. We must first examine Hodson's report before any more of Jinnah's private correspondence is studied.

H. V. Hodson's Report

Worth noticing is that Hodson's understanding which Jinnah refers to was placed before the aforementioned paragraph by Jalal (1985, pp. 69-70). If we see the report (Transfer of Power, Vol. I, p. 63), he was on tour till 7th December 1941 and wrote it after this date but before 25th December when one of the Ministers of Assam that he met was relieved under Section 93 by the Governor. Jinnah's letter to Nawab Ismail was of 25th November. Viceroy Linlithgow received Hodson's note in the middle of January of 1942 (Transfer of Power, Vol. I, p. 57), and there is no evidence Jinnah ever saw the note. In this situation, we can not be sure of what Jinnah means when he says, 'I think Mr. Hodson fully understands as to what our demand is. As to what Hodson understands of the Muslim League position (or 'our position' in Jinnah's letter), it does not correspond to what Jalal implies. For this, a closer examination of Hodson's findings is required alongside how Jalal reports it ([Jalal, 1985, pp. 69-71](#)). Firstly, Jalal slightly misquotes Jinnah. In the last line of the final letter, Jinnah states, 'Mr. Hodson fully understands...' while Jalal states, 'Mr. Hodson finally understands...'. Perhaps an error in copying from the original file into her manuscript; the difference between 'fully' and 'finally' is much significant. Jalal, in her paragraph, pieces together one of Jinnah's 1943 speeches ([Pirzada, 1970, p. 425](#)) with the 1941 letter in question to build a narrative. 'Finally' implies Jinnah was eager for someone among the British to understand his point and perhaps, undo Pakistan that was 'fostered upon us. 'Fully' as in what Jinnah actually said, needs more elaboration.

Hodson states that every Muslim League politician he interviewed supported the Pakistan theory except A. K. Fazlul Huq (Transfer of Power, Vol. I, pp. 65-66). Then he goes on to say that every Muslim Leaguer, with but one exception, conceived Pakistan as a confederation in India. The names of the leaders who subscribed to this view were also supplied by Hodson, and these were H. S. Suhrawardy, Mahomed Saadullah, Sobhan Khan, Abdul Hameed Khan, Abdul Matin Choudhry, and Nawab Ismail. Jalal also mentions this list but puts them under those leaders who would like to see the British continue in defense for a 'transitional

period' ([Jalal, 1985, p.70, note 96](#)). Her assertion that the 'exception' mentioned in Hodson's note was Fazlul Huq is also incorrect because Hodson's list only includes those who subscribed to confederation being consistent with Pakistan, whereas Fazlul Huq didn't even subscribe to Pakistan at all at that time, as per Hodson himself.

The 'exception' in Hodson's note is none other than Jinnah himself. We know from Ismail's letter mentioned above that Jinnah was also interviewed. Hodson also describes Jinnah's own views, but without including him in the list of those who subscribed to the confederation. 'Jinnah', Hodson states, 'urged' on him a 'proposition that the accomplishment of Pakistan would so relieve communal tension as to render special safeguards for minorities much less necessary than at present. Hodson observes that among the leaders he interviewed, there was no genuine enthusiasm for Pakistan, but none repudiated it for fear of incurring Jinnah's wrath, among other reasons. None of this is mentioned by Jalal. This brings us back to Jinnah's last letter to Ismail and what he meant by 'our position.'

Clearly, there was no single position for Jinnah to claim as a whole. While no record exists of the rest of the leaders informing Jinnah what they said to Hodson, there is every chance he must have known by other means (telephone, in-person meeting, a lost telegram, or letter). Hence, Jalal's use of Hodson's note and Jinnah's letter raise even more questions than they answer. There are four distinct possibilities that might explain this situation. First, Hodson understood that League, Jinnah, and the other leaders included wanted confederation. Second, Hodson understood that Jinnah wanted partition, but some Leaguers didn't. Third, Jinnah and his lieutenants gave various contradictory statements on Lahore Resolution on purpose, and Nawab Ismail was a participant in this. Fourth, Ismail wasn't a participant and was alarmed by Jinnah's insistence on partition and sought a reply.

The first one is Jalal's position and is clearly untenable, as the above paragraph shows. The second one is possible but doesn't explain why Jinnah said, 'I cannot say anything more because it is liable to be misunderstood and misrepresented, especially at present. The third one is also possible

but it doesn't explain, on its own, why he wrote such panicked letters to Jinnah, while the fourth option cannot explain what Jinnah meant when he said we 'cannot commit ourselves definitely yet, beyond the Lahore Resolution. In the next sections, we will explore the second and third possibilities with help from the next section, where some more of Jinnah's private views as well as those of his lieutenants are examined.

Jinnah and Firoz Khan Noon's Scheme

Unlike what Jalal says, Jinnah had no issue after the Lahore Resolution in publicly conceptualizing Pakistan as having a common center with the rest of India. The clearest example of this comes between December 1941 and September 1942 in a series of letters and interviews. On 1st December 1941, Jinnah told Evelyn Wrench (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 17, pp. 344-6) he wanted Dominion status with the two Muslim zones to be self-governing except for defense and external affairs under a central authority headed by the Viceroy. He proposed Hindus to have three zones, and hence there would be total five self-governing zones. Jinnah spoke at length in favor of partitioning India and against the concept of a single Dominion. However, this scheme is notable for the presence of a central authority. Jinnah mentions the similarity of the five zones to Upper and Lower Canada before the 1867 British North America Act. Established in 1791, the two provinces had separate administrators appointed by the Governor-General, separate criminal and civil laws, and separate legislative councils and assemblies. Jinnah also talked of the evolutionary history of Canada, where its politics grew over time, with full legislative sovereignty achieved with the Statute of Westminster in 1931. It is clear that here Jinnah refers to an All-India center contrary to what he said above on 21st March 1941.

Wrench mentions that a similar scheme was apprised to him by Firoz Khan Noon. In August 1942, Firoz Khan Noon, in a speech, called for an All-India center. Paradoxically, Jinnah wrote to him, asking him to refrain from committing himself individually, to read the resolutions following the Lahore Resolution, and leave arriving at a settlement to the Muslim League (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 18, pp. 389-91). Later on, in September 1942,

in a letter to Saieduddin Ahmed, he referred again to the Noon scheme and explicitly mentioned that a common center was fatal to the Lahore Resolution (Shamsul Hasan Collection, Misc. 1/39). Interestingly, on 10th December 1945, Jinnah compared Pakistan and Hindustan to Canada and United States, instead of Upper and Lower Canada (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 11, pp. 405-6). Jinnah reiterated the comparison with the United States and Canada again on 13th December 1946 in an interview with W. Muller of the BBC, making a further comparison with South American states (Jinnah Papers, Vol. 14, p. 737).

British Informants on Jinnah

Jinnah's strategy can be further deciphered through British informants' reports of him. Linlithgow's informant sent a report to him in November 1942 of a secret chat they had with Jinnah and which Linlithgow termed the 'clearest exposition' of Jinnah's views he had yet seen. In it, Jinnah explained in detail his distrust of Congress and that he insisted on parity in the provisional setup, particularly so that it could never be made permanent and make Pakistan impossible (Transfer of Power, Vol. III, pp. 266-270). Linlithgow received intelligence of Jinnah's in-camera speech to his Working Committee from April 1943 that, it is commented in the report, shows a change in his mind, possibly due to more power at his disposal after the death of Sikandar Hayat Khan. Jinnah speaks about his distrust of the British and also a very important point that Pakistan 'commodity is available not in the Congress market but in the British market'. Contrast this with March 1939, where Jinnah had urged his fellows to use Pakistan's demand to put pressure on Congress. Tellingly, Jinnah informs his Working Committee not to commit themselves to the determination of fundamental rights for citizens in Pakistan and also avoid a cut and dried scheme for the country so as to prevent dissension in Muslim camp (Transfer of Power, Vol. III, pp. 918-922). These two episodes perhaps explain why Jinnah laid out such an elaborate plan to give polar opposite statements on the nature of Pakistan and meant them to reach British ears so as to keep space for negotiation

depending on the attitude of the British whose 'market' was the only one able to give the 'Pakistan commodity'.

Jinnah's lieutenants' Disparate Statements on Pakistan

We have seen that Jinnah himself began the practice of giving ambiguous statements on Pakistan and partition. It may be suggested that several League leaders also followed this practice, or perhaps their views changed over time.

Chundrigar's 1940 comment on Lahore Resolution may be contrasted with his view at the League Legislators' Convention at Delhi in April 1946 ([Zaidi, Vol. VI, 1979, p. 183](#)), where he equated Pakistan and Hindustan with other independent countries of the past. Liaquat Ali Khan, in a January 1945 public speech, stated that 'India is our country' and 'it is the duty of everyone of us to stand for its independence' ([Dawn, 21st January 1945](#)). Yet, on 25th September 1945, Liaquat, in a speech at Aligarh Muslim University, refuted that Pakistan was a counter for bargaining ([The Pioneer, 25th September 1945](#)).

Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman of United Provinces in February 1940 advocated a dominion separate from Hindustan (Linlithgow Papers, Mss Eur F 125/103). However, he also readily stated in later years that Pakistan would be having a common center with Hindustan (Transfer of Power, Vol. VI, p. 727 and Vol. VII, p. 42) and that partition was a bargaining counter (Transfer of Power, Vol. V, p. 749). Yet still elsewhere he conceived of Pakistan as independent (Transfer of Power, Vol. VII, p. 166-9).

Henry Twynam (Governor Central Provinces and Berar) reported that Khwaja Nazimuddin, in an interview, oscillated between union between Pakistan and Hindustan and complete separation (Transfer of Power, Vol. IV, pp. 839-40). Governor of Bengal, Richard Casey quoted Nazimuddin as saying that Jinnah had asked them not to put up concrete proposals for they would be torn to pieces at this stage (Transfer of Power, Vol. VI, p. 194). A little after that Nazimuddin informed Casey explicitly that Pakistan was not a bargaining counter (Transfer of Power, Vol. VI, p. 246).

Nawab Ismail was a curious case. On 26th December 1940, in his presidential address at the United Provinces Muslim League Conference he came out with perhaps the most downplayed assessment of the Lahore Resolution. Ismail stated that what was contemplated was only the grouping of Muslim majority provinces, with 'sovereignty' meaning the same as previous demands of federation of fully autonomous states. A confederation was also possible, he declared (Indian Annual Register Year 1940, Vol. 2, p. 260). Jinnah's secretary, K. H. Khurshid (Hasan, 1990, p. 61), gives an account of Qazi Isa describing Ismail as extremely apprehensive of Pakistan with its connotations of partition and division. Khurshid quotes Ismail himself (Hasan, 1990, p. 50) complaining to Jinnah that he didn't take them into confidence.

These were the dynamic views of Jinnah's top lieutenants in the Pakistan Movement. Despite their own different conceptions of Pakistan, it would seem that they stood solidly behind Jinnah and, at times, perhaps on Jinnah's instructions, intimated to the British that Pakistan was open for negotiations. Indeed, while Hodson got the impression that they were afraid to repudiate Jinnah, all of them did so quite candidly in their interviews with Hodson. Out of these, the most peculiar case is of Nawab Ismail, who it seems feared partition the most and was the only one of Hodson's interviewees who wrote to Jinnah in a panic before his meeting, unsure what to tell the Reforms Commissioner. This brings us to the different possible explanations of Jinnah's 25th November 1941 letter to Ismail. One explanation was that Hodson's understanding of the League's position was that some League leaders genuinely did not see Pakistan as a partition, even though Jinnah did. Another explanation was that League leaders knowingly gave this statement to Hodson so as to keep the path open for future negotiations with the British (their own opinions notwithstanding), but Nawab Ismail, not sure of this, panicked on Jinnah's (public) insistence on the partition.

Perhaps the latter explanation is the most plausible. It is not clear what Jinnah's top lieutenants genuinely believed. However, it is clear that Ismail

was the only one with the problem, and it was he who sought Jinnah's views in writing. Jinnah, who had previously given no instructions with regards to Hodson to Ismail, sensing danger, gave him a vague answer, referring him to the Lahore Resolution's text repeatedly. Jinnah's words 'we cannot commit ourselves definitely yet, beyond the Lahore Resolution' perhaps mean that the League could ill-afford to give up this strategy of keeping Pakistan's nature ambiguous in front of the British. Similarly, Jinnah's reticence in the letter ('I cannot say anything more because it is liable to be misunderstood and misrepresented, especially at present) is not, as Jalal claims, an attempt to hide Jinnah's real aims (he was very keen to talk openly about India as a motherland in his 'Time and Tide' article only a year before, and of a common center to Evelyn Wrench a few days later, if that indeed were his real aims) but rather a reluctance to commit to one side as Nawab Ismail demanded. Indeed it was commonplace for Jinnah to dodge inopportune questions by referring to either the Lahore Resolution or one of his booklets (See Jinnah's reply to Desmond Boyle above). That a variety of leaders needed to be mobilized and motivated was perhaps one of the reasons that Jinnah at times ignored their public and private announcement of Pakistan's conception as a confederation (or extolling Indian nationalism) and at other times rebuked it as per the demand of the situation. No one pressed him as much as Nawab Ismail, and so he went only so far as stating that Hodson, perhaps, could be told whatever Ismail wanted.

That Hodson believed Jinnah to be sincere with partition is confirmed in his later book 'The Great Divide' where he states that the scheme of Sikandar Hayat Khan and Jinnah's conception of Pakistan were 'totally different. The same wording of the Lahore Resolution was taken in two different forms by both men, leading Sikandar to denounce the scheme completely (Hodson, 1969, p. 89). The point to ponder becomes this: if Jinnah really wanted a confederation, what exactly did he have to fear from those within the League who opposed Pakistan and indeed from Sir Sikandar's zonal scheme?

The Two Simla Conferences

While Jinnah's double-speak on Pakistan (in both public and private) cannot tell us much about his conception of the nature of Pakistan, his polar opposite attitude in the two Simla conferences of 1945 and 1946 might be instructive in this regard. In June 1945, Jinnah rejected parity offered by both Congress and Viceroy Wavell (Transfer of Power, Vol. V, p. 955, 986, 1152 and 1153) and refused to send nominations for the interim government over his demand of only the Muslim League has the right to nominate Muslims in the setup, something neither Wavell nor Congress would give him (Transfer of Power, Vol. V, p. 1154, 1166 and 1170). At this the conference finished, and Jinnah was unanimously blamed by the British as having wrecked it with his intransigence (Transfer of Power, Vol. V, p. 1201, 1224 and 1227).

Perhaps Jinnah wanted to build up the League for the elections that he knew were coming to India after the end of the war in the western theater. What is striking, however, is how his attitude changed completely in April and May of 1946 when the Cabinet Delegation began conducting interviews and talks with Indian leaders. He was also faced with a Labour government which was more amenable to the Congress as compared to the previous Conservative government led by Churchill, who had a deep personal dislike for the Congress and used minorities to bring political deadlocks (Transfer of Power, Vol. V, p. 30). Moreover, this was a government deeply committed to the British pledge of independence to India. Jinnah and the League were also 'frightened' by the Congress's willingness to come into power once more and the readiness with which they accepted coming in to interim government, submitting their lists of nominees quickly. Khaliquzzaman and Nazimuddin were both of this opinion (Transfer of Power, Vol. V, p. 1269). Even the British recognized this sudden change (Transfer of Power, Vol. V, p. 1293). Therefore, it was impossible in the 1946 conference to not accept whatever the British offered to Jinnah, compounded by Pethick-Lawrence's open threat to hand over power to a united India if Jinnah didn't cooperate (Transfer of Power, Vol. VII, p. 123). This time around, the British gave parity at the center

once more, but Congress was unwilling (Transfer of Power, Vol. VII, p. 451). Still, Jinnah accepted the Mission's plan before the Congress and with full knowledge that Congress had not accepted the 'groupings clause' (Transfer of Power, Vol. VII, p. 614) and saw the constituent assembly as sovereign (Transfer of Power, Vol. VII, p. 646-48 and p. 639-41).

Jinnah knew of the British preference for united India (Transfer of Power, Vol. I, p. 344, Vol. VI, p. 971, Vol. VII, p. 41) and their reluctance to hand over outright power to Congress (Transfer of Power, Vol. V, p. 1061). He played the trump card when he asked Wavell what would happen if League accepted the proposals and Congress didn't. Wavell showed him in writing his assurance that they would include League in the interim govt (Transfer of Power, Vol. VII, pp. 784-6). However, the British had always been uneasy about this question and internally divided (Transfer of Power, Vol. V, p. 905, 1090, 1175, 1222, Vol. VI, p. 178, 505, Vol. VII, p. 480, pp. 782-3), fully expecting Jinnah to reject coming into the interim government (Transfer of Power, Vol. VII, p. 495-503) while Jinnah knew they would never keep their word (Transfer of Power, Vol. VII, p. 887 and 1038). This is exactly what happened, and Jinnah took back both the League's acceptance of Cabinet Mission Plan and the interim government proposal. In the aftermath, it is remarkable how British assessment of Jinnah changed from last year. Far from being held responsible for wrecking it, he was now lauded (Transfer of Power, Vol. VII, p. 1008 and 1039), his attitude to Congress justified by the Viceroy

(Transfer of Power, Vol. VII, p. 951) with Mission members such as A. V. Alexander criticizing Congress strongly (Transfer of Power, Vol. VII, p. 1024) and Wavell himself deeming Gandhi now to be ultimately responsible for breakdown (Transfer of Power, Vol. VII, p. 1082). Using this sympathy, Jinnah perhaps aimed to achieve leverage in further discussions on Pakistan, where he desperately wanted to avoid the partition of Punjab and Bengal.

Conclusion

Jinnah's conception of Pakistan is made complex by his polar opposite statements on the nature of Pakistan. Indeed, his letter to Nawab Ismail would suggest at face value that he did not want a sovereign Pakistan at all. Further investigations into the whole corpus of his private meetings and dealings would suggest that any such conclusion would be mistaken. However, what is clear is that he did have a coherent strategy to get his real aims with his lieutenants following the same line. This paper suggests that this strategy could only be correctly gauged through his actions, and it was a mix of advocacy for outright partition and the appeasement of the British through public and private statements that would show Pakistan as consistent with a confederation. Where and when Jinnah deployed this depended on British attitude. Moreover, Jinnah gave different statements to a variety of Muslim leaders and questioners based on the situation at hand. Given this, it would suggest that his real aim, since at least autumn of 1939, was a sovereign Pakistan with no links to India except on treaty as between sovereign nations.

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