

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSION  
FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM IN  
PAKISTAN, DACCA.

S E C R E T

REF: 144.

16th December, 1948.

BORDER AFFAIRS-BURMA

My dear Grafftey Smith,

I reported in paragraph II(1) of my Weekly Report No. 44 that M. Burke, Joint Secretary to the Pakistan Foreign Affairs Department, had been visiting East Bengal to obtain information about the disputed border areas. He was also interested in the Arakan and circulated a questionnaire marked 'Top Secret' about conditions there to local officers in Chittagong. The enclosed copy of the questionnaire gives the reply to it by Niblett, the Deputy Commissioner of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. This officer, as I have already reported, is ultra-Pakistani, witness his proposal that the Pakistan Government should mediate with the Burma Government in Arakan on behalf of the Mujabids.

2. So far as I know, the replies to the questionnaire have not yet reached the Foreign Affairs Department at Karachi.

Yours sincerely,

(SGD) L. G. COKE WALLIS.

Encl:- Eight copies of the letter and its enclosure.

Sir L.B. Grafftey Smith, KBE., CMG.,  
High Commissioner for the United Kingdom  
in Pakistan,  
KARACHI.

[Note 20 March 2019. The Deputy Commissioner was Major L H Niblett who was previously an officer in the British Army.]



(Enclosure to REF. 144 dated the 16th December, 1948 from the Deputy High Commissioner, Dacca.)

SECRET.

QUESTIONNAIRE.

1. Q. Present position of revolt in Arakan?

A. Mujahid party have recruited about 3,000 volunteers. They have practically assumed control of their part of Akyab division.

2. Q. Area where Mujahids form a majority?

A. Throughout Akyab district and especially in the Bowlibazar, Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Tamru, Dharla and Kayangmaung areas.

3. Q. Actual area controlled by Mujahids?

A. Tamru, Bowlibazar, Maungdaw, Dharla and Kuar bil.

4. Q. Total population of 2 above?

A. 50,000

5. Q. Population of 3 above?

A. 25-50,000.

6. Q. Any danger of refugees pouring in?

A. Yes

Q. When?

A. When Burma Government forces, at present held up, advance.

Q. In what numbers?

A. 5,000 Mujahids and 5,000 others mostly Communists.

Q. In what parts of our territory?

A. Ghundang and forests to north of it in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

7. Q. What should we do with the refugees?

A. Concentrate them in camps at Chittagong, segregating according to whether Mujahids or Communists.

8. Q. Is it physically possible to seal the frontier?

A. No.

(9 and 10) Q. Who are the leaders of the Mujahids?

A.1. Mv. Nazir Ahmed	}	All of Maungdaw.
2. Mv. Sultan Ahmed		
3. Mv. Zafar Kwal.		
4. Mv. Abul Hussain.		

11. Q. What is the attitude of the following to the Mujahids?

1. Our Provincial Government.

A. 'Benign' but not to the extent of giving active help.

2. District Officers.

A. Sympathetic and awaiting directions.



3. Political Leaders.

A. None interested in East Bengal

4. People.

A. Muslim sympathy is general but some Bengali Muslims are indifferent to non-Bengali speaking Mujahids.

12.Q. What are the demands of the Mujahids?

- A. 1. Free Muslim state in Akyab  
2. Urdu as their state language.  
3. No bar to cow slaughter  
4. The right to sell and export their own products.

These demands are stated to have been refused by the Burma Government.

13.Q. What attitude should be taken by the Government of Pakistan?

A1. Government should offer their good offices to the Burma Government in mediation on behalf of the Mujahids.

2. Avoid getting involved in influx of refugees.

14.Q. Total population of Burma?

A. 15 millions.

15.Q. Percentage of Muslims in Burma?

A. Not known.

16.Q. Have any tribes in Burma been granted or promised autonomy?

A. Yes. Karens and Kachins have been promised autonomy.

Q. What areas do they inhabit?

A. Mostly Eastern Burma.

Q. What is their population?

A. 10 millions.

Q. What is their religion?

A. Buddhism.

Q. What form of autonomy?

A. Not known.

Q. Any chance of Mujahids being offered and accepting similar terms?

A. Yes. If mediator from Pakistan offers them fair terms calculated to maintain their identity.

17.Q. Any point which local officers wish to emphasize specially?

A. Essential to obtain best terms for Mujahids, who guard our frontiers and are loyal to Pakistan.



Ref: S/273/100/668.

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(Sir Paul has not seen)

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER  
FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUILDING  
WOOD STREET  
KARACHI

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TOP SECRET.

FILE COPY

4th March, 1949. E.15

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My dear Liesching,

(has not seen)

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Although it is rather out of date, you may be interested to see the attached copy of a report written by the Deputy Commissioner, Chittagong Hill Tracts, dated the 7th February, which deals with recent border incidents on the Arakan/East Bengal border. I am marking this letter Top Secret in view of the source of the report, which was sent to us by Coke Wallis in Dacca.

2. Coke Wallis understands from the Commissioner, Chittagong Division, that Majahid casualties in the five days' fighting on the 4th February were only one killed and two wounded against fourteen killed and five wounded in the Burmese forces. Also that the Majahids are in a position to resume their activities.

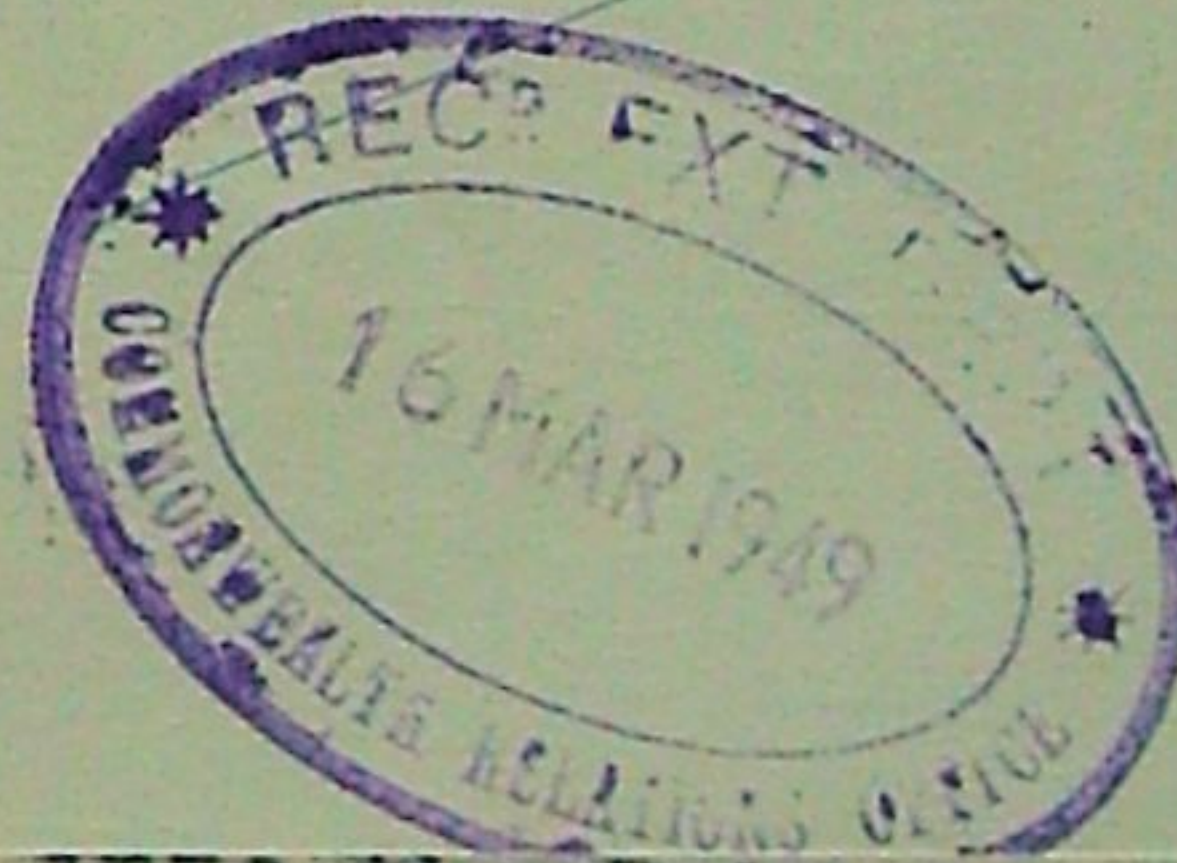
3. I am sending a copy of this letter with its enclosure to Bowker in Rangoon.

Yours sincerely

John A. H. Smith

Sir Percivale Liesching, KCB, KCMG,  
Commonwealth Relations Office,  
LONDON, S.W.1.

PRO/AHCW/5.



...ing into the Pakistan territory.



SECRET.

Copy of Report dated Rangamati, 7th February 1949, by the Deputy Commissioner, Chittagong Hill Tracts.

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On receipt of Government's Code Message regarding intended assault on certain positions at Tumbru, I deputed the Circle Inspector of Police to proceed to the habitation in juxtaposition to the area of possible attack to warn the villagers to withdraw directly they heard any sound of gun fire on the Burma side. I also ordered my E.P.R. Platoon here to "stand-to" and await directions for their move forward.

The following day, I got in touch with the District Magistrate, Chittagong and he informed me that Major Ahmed had proceeded to the area and that one of the platoons meant for Rangamati had been diverted at Chittagong to the affected area along with Major Ahmed. I then got orders to move my platoon from here and taking the platoon and my Assistant Commissioner, Mr. Abdul Hamid Bhuiyan, with me, I proceeded immediately by motor launch, train and motor bus to Ghundum for insurgent headquarters (which they had already captured) and had opened fire on it. Major Ahmed had collected the people at the back of a hill; but not before one of them - a visitor from Tamu had been wounded. Major Ahmed then proceeded with a white flag and saw the Commander of the Burmese force and informed him that he was firing into the Pakistan territory. Immediately on arrival I went with the Assistant Commissioner to see the Force Commander to find out what explanation he had for this action. He claimed that three of the Ghundum private lorries were across the bridge on the Burmese side when he arrived and that they had been fired at in that position; but Major Ahmed assured me and him that this was not so as was proved from the fact that a Burmese machine gun was actually placed on the bridge itself and trained towards Ghundum Bazar. Many people had miraculous escapes and I have picked up some pieces of rifle ammunition from the shops at Ghundum, also a piece of shell immediately below the Dak



I need hardly mention that I heartily disapproved of this action of the O.C., if it was true. However, we approached what we thought were 40 Mujahids only to find a hundred in number and carrying five times the number of Bren guns and Sten guns that we had. Their leader had a hand grenade attached to his belt. When I addressed them, calling on them to lay down their arms or to get out of our territory, they refused to do so either unless and until they had orders from their leaders whom they thought were at Balukhali. Just then it came to my knowledge that we were covered by another 100 armed Mujahids on the adjacent hill. It was obvious that any use of actual force in these circumstances would not only have put us in a position of enmity with the Mujahids; but my small force would have been annihilated with consequent loss of prestige to the State. I then called down the Mujahids from the hill-top and having gathered them all together, addressed them in Urdu which they understood and told them that they would unnecessarily cause bloodshed if they stayed and that they had either to lay down their arms or march off immediately. On seeing that we were determined to carry out our intentions, three Mujahids came out of the valley and said that their leaders wanted them to go back into battle and so they were prepared to get out. They then marched across the borders. We organised proper patrolling to see that there would be no re-entry. I also took from their leader a solemn pledge that they would not return failing which we would be compelled to open fire. They kept this promise and proceeded to Fakirabad six miles away where they fought an action with the Burmese Force lasting over two days.



On the 2nd February we were informed that 43 Mujahids were at Reju and were looting the villagers. My Assistant Commissioner and I along with Major Ahmed and a strong force of E.P.R. marched immediately reaching at dusk. The Mujahids got scent of our coming and moved over the borders. We found they were a different party to that which we met the day before. They had actually done no looting but had merely asked for a little rice and two fowls which the Mogh Karbari's wife (in the absence of the Karbari) quite happily supplied them. We have since left a platoon of E.P.R. at Chundum, withdrawn the reserve to Ukhia and are patrolling the Reju and Balukhali areas with E.P.R. patrols. We have placed an armed police patrol at Sonaichari and so our borders are now protected, and I think I can say with confidence that we now have neither Burmese forces nor Mujahids within our area.

I have not so far mentioned two charred corpses which were brought over across the Burma border by a refugee. They were those of his father and uncle. It was a ghastly sight and as the Sub-Divisional Officer, Maungdaw and Welfare Officer of Maungdaw had asked to see me to demand of me the Mujahid leaders, Jafar Miah and Omar Miah, I brought them over and showed them these burnt torsos. They said they had information about these two leaders being at Balukhali and I told them that I too had heard such a rumour but I knew nothing else about it and in any case it was outside my charge. They said they would move the Pakistan Government to hand them over to their Government.

I should also mention that apart from seven head of cattle killed in our area mostly belonging to refugees who had come over with large numbers of livestock,

headquarters with the story that the



Force Commander had ~~9~~ then that they could enter Burma; apparently a very large number of domesticated animals were killed and villages on the Burma side burnt by the Burmese forces apparently in pursuance of a scorched earth policy. The common rumour on both sides of the border is that this destruction is being done with deliberate intention to keep the Muslims out and to replace them with the ferocious Moghs who constitute the traditional enemies of these Muslims who settled in the Arakan. The Sub-Divisional Officer, Cox's Bazar tells me a movement of these Moghs from Cox's Bazar has already started and they are selling up their property to return to Burma. What lends colour to this is that when I expressed surprise at this devastation of villages to the Burma Welfare Officer, he said that they were anxious to have the refugees back; but that he could neither permit any of the grain to come over nor could he permit the houses to stay as they may constitute nests for Mujahids in future. However, after the Sub-Divisional Officer and the Welfare Officer of Maungdaw had gone, I managed to persuade the Force Commander, Colonel Crampin (who once upon a time belonged to the same regiment as myself, the 4th Bombay Grenadiers) to sell all the grain captured at Mujahid Headquarters and all the grain collected from the various villages, to our people as I told him that we could not afford to keep his refugees and they on their part had not left them the chance to live on their side of the border, at least for the present. Having brought this grain up by launch, he had these villages burnt on the night of the 3rd February. Still I advised the refugees to go back to whatever little was left to them before the Burmese forces left. Some of them went but came back from Burmese Headquarters with the story that the



Force Commander had told them that they could enter Burma; but once they entered there would be no returning even for purchases from the Ghundum Bazar. They therefore, decided not to take the risk. I have about 2000 refugees in my area and I understand, Chittagong district has about 20,000.

The Burmese forces were to have withdrawn on the evening of the 3rd February but were delayed by the battle at Fakirabad, where their forces had apparently been cut off by Mujahids. When they had not returned by the morning of the 4th February, it was planned for the remaining Burmese force at Ghundum to proceed to their rescue and after joining them to go further south back to Rangoon.

The Burmese Government is leaving a small skeleton staff of Armed Police in this area, apparently to arrest such of the Muslims of Arakan who were found to have subscribed to the Mujahid organisation. Here I should mention that they captured a list of subscribers along with other papers, at Mujahid Headquarters at Ghundum. Anyhow, this skeleton staff of Armed Police can never cope with the Mujahids, who are still strong in this area. Undoubtedly, they lost the battle at Ghundum and also at Tumbru; but their policy is a 'hit and run' one. It is in pursuance of this policy that it is reported that the Burmese forces lost 14 killed and had 5 wounded while the Mujahids lost only one killed and two wounded.

As a matter of fact I met Jafar Miah at Amirabad, Chittagong district on the way back from Ghundum on the 4th February and I must confess that it would be difficult to find a finer specimen of fighting manhood or a more balanced person than Jafar Meah. He is most anxious to



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withdraw all the Mujahid forces; but he is afraid to be seen on the spot in case his intention is misunderstood. At our request, he is, however, sending a message for the Mujahids to cease their activities altogether.

It is said that the Mujahids will now concentrate at Amtali two miles from my border and make their market purchases at Garjania Bazar within the Chittagong district. This takes them across the deserted area of Bhalukhala in my charge and I feel that if they actually deliver up their arms to us they could be given refuge in this village as their own country has been scorched and unless they have something to live upon they will undoubtedly be compelled to live the life of bandits. I consider it would be most inadvisable to hand them over to the Burma Government as it would alienate the sympathies of 200 thousand Muslims in North Arakan, who are devoted to the cause of Pakistan, and who constitute our only buffer against approaching communism on this side.