

The attitude of the Mahsud elders was satisfactory, but the vacillations of the Madda Khel necessitated air action, after due warning, against three villages in which the murderers were being harboured.

On the 9th of March a proclamation by the Governor was issued throughout Waziristan in which the origins of the present unrest were traced and the tribes invited to co-operate in the restoration of normal conditions. On the same day representatives of the Tori Khel Wazirs were interviewed and warned to control their tribe and carry out their agreements under pain of drastic action by Government. The tribal elders were submissive but admitted their inability to control their hostile sections. In the meantime the attitude of members of the Mahsud tribes of the Shaktu valley became more threatening and many joined the following of the Faqir.

4. The situation was obviously unsatisfactory and deteriorating. Accordingly, Headquarters of the 1st (Indian) Division (Major-General E. de Burgh, C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E.) together with the 3rd Infantry Brigade (Brigadier A. N. Floyer Acland, D.S.O., M.C.) were ordered to Waziristan. The latter completed its concentration at Mir Ali on the 14th of March and troops then assumed responsibility for the protection of the road from Bannu to the Nariwela Narai, north of Damdil, and the construction of permanent piquets was commenced.

5. During the latter half of March further political negotiations were carried on with tribal representatives, but these negotiations, far from resulting in an improvement in the situation, were used by the Faqir to gain time and enhance his prestige. Outrages on roads continued, and on the 21st of March a camp piquet of the 1st Infantry Brigade near Damdil was heavily attacked by tribesmen. This series of incidents culminated on the 20th of March in a serious attack on troops of the 1st Infantry Brigade near Damdil.

6. On the 20th of March two infantry battalions, supported by a battery of mountain artillery left Damdil camp to open the road south of Damdil for the passage of a convoy. The initial road protection piquets were established without incident, but later the leading troops were subjected to heavy attacks by tribesmen, who increased in numbers as the day progressed. The original attacks were repulsed with the aid of armoured cars, and later in the day reinforcements from Damdil turned the enemy's flank and inflicted heavy casualties, the approach of darkness preventing the complete envelopment of the enemy who fought with great courage and resolution. Throughout the day aircraft of the Royal Air Force ably supported the troops.

7. In spite of heavy tribal casualties, this action had little effect on the general situation, and by the 5th of April, which marked the expiration of the period of grace allowed to the Tori Khel for compliance with Government terms, no settlement had been reached. Measures to bring pressure to bear on the whole Tori Khel tribe were accordingly taken. These measures included political pressure in the form of forfeiture of allowances, exclusion of the tribe from certain settled districts, and the evacuation of villages located within three miles of the Bannu-Razmak road. In addition, inhabitants were ordered to evacuate

within a specified period an area round Arsal Kot, the Faqir of Ipi's headquarters, and a belt of country in the Lower Khaisora valley, under threat of air action should they fail to do so. The areas in which inhabitants are so warned to evacuate are described hereinafter as "proscribed areas", and in all cases, before air action is commenced, ample time is allowed to enable inhabitants to comply with Government orders and leave the area.

8. Despite these measures the general situation did not improve and there were no signs that the tribal leaders would be able to regain control over their irresponsible elements. Frequent raids were carried out into the settled districts, camps and piquets were sniped and bridges, culverts and telephone lines on the roads were damaged by tribal gangs. As a result of the heavy sniping of posts in the Shinki defile between Mir Ali and Bannu, an area of three miles on each side of the road through the defile was proscribed from the 12th of April. A general warning was also given that in the event of any attack on troops or posts, all tribesmen within a two mile radius of such troops or posts would be liable to attack from the air or by troops after a sufficient lapse of time to enable non-hostiles to withdraw.

In the middle of April the Scouts Post at Spinwam, north of Mir Ali, was attacked by tribesmen and culverts and bridges in that area were damaged, while attacks on piquets occurred in the Razmak area where the water supply pipe line was damaged. In the Spinwam area air action against a village known to be the refuge of hostile gangs, followed by threats of further air action against hostile concentrations, caused a local improvement in the situation.

9. Meanwhile, in South Waziristan the Mahsud situation gave rise to anxiety, although the attitude of the tribal elders was generally satisfactory. Outwardly, the tribes appeared steady, and motor transport convoys continued to run between Manzai and Razmak, and Manzai and Wana, the road being policed in the usual way by tribal khassadars.

On the 9th of April, a convoy from Manzai to Wana was attacked in the Shahur Tangi, a defile a few miles west of Jandola by a party of mixed Mahsuds and Bhitannis. The convoy, consisting of about fifty lorries, was escorted by four armoured cars, with an infantry escort and a detachment of Sappers and Miners in lorries. One aircraft provided continuous tactical reconnaissance over the convoy. The Shahur Tangi is a long and narrow gorge commanded on both sides by precipitous hills, which, in accordance with normal practice, it was the duty of khassadars (tribal police) to occupy. Although local information had indicated that attacks on convoys were unlikely, actually the majority of the khassadars had left their posts, and it is probable, therefore, that they were aware that an attack on the convoy was impending.

10. The convoy was attacked throughout its length by hostile tribesmen from positions in broken ground close to the road. Heavy casualties among the personnel of the convoy were incurred early in the action, and the majority of the lorries were blocked in the defile. Armoured cars and the infantry escort fought gallantly and were successful in preventing the