

*Arrangements for Internal Security in re-occupied Burma.*

134. As we advanced into Burma, we had to find troops for internal security in re-occupied territory, until such time as the police force could be re-created.

I had of course no intention of detaching battalions from infantry divisions on such duty. The most suitable type of unit was one composed of officers and men who had had experience in the Burma Frontier Force or Burma Military Police. I, therefore, arranged with the Commander-in-Chief, India, for 2 and 4 Burma Regiments to be trained for this duty and earmarked for Fourteenth Army. I said that I should probably need more battalions.

I also asked the Commander-in-Chief, India, to obtain the agreement of the Government of Burma to disband the Northern Kachin Levies and to re-form them into two Kachin battalions for use later for internal security.

*Re-organization of the Chain of Command.*

135. I had come to the conclusion in August that future operations would make continued control of the Arakan operations by Headquarters, Fourteenth Army, impossible. I therefore ordered that a re-organization of command should be examined on the following basis:—

(a) That the command of 15 Indian Corps should pass from Headquarters, Fourteenth Army, to H.Q., 11 Army Group.

(b) That H.Q., Fourteenth Army, should be reconstituted as a mobile Field Army H.Q., for the command of two Corps, and be relieved of the responsibility for the lines of communication.

I was also examining the formation of a new headquarters to be known as H.Q., L. of C. Command, to be located at Comilla. I intended that the Commander of the Lines of Communication should command both the existing Areas (202 and 404) of the L. of C. and thus free the Commander, Fourteenth Army, and Commander, 15 Indian Corps, from the work which the control of the lines of communication involved.

136. As a result of this examination, I gave the following orders:—

(a) H.Q., Fourteenth Army, to be re-organized.

(b) H.Q., L. of C. Command, to be set up, the commander of which would assume control directly under H.Q., 11 Army Group, of the existing 202 and 404 L. of C. Areas.

(c) Establishments of H.Q., Sub-Areas, to be standardised to simplify the future adjustment of boundaries of sub-areas.

(d) Two Advanced Echelons, 11 Army Group, one of which already existed, to be formed to assist H.Q., 11 Army Group to control general administration on the L. of C. The date selected for the transfer of 15 Indian Corps to command of 11 Army Group and the formation of H.Q., L. of C. Command, was the 15th November. H.Q., Fourteenth Army, moved to Imphal at the same time.

137. In re-organizing Command and Administration I was looking ahead. I foresaw that when the re-occupation of Burma was complete, the commander of these Ls. of C. would probably extend his command to include the whole of Burma and that 202 and 404 Areas

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would then be transferred to the command of the Commander-in-Chief, India. The flexibility of the organization should admit of future adjustments and extensions.

138. This examination of the organization of the L. of C. confirmed my opinion that some re-organization of the establishments of reception camps, reinforcement camps, feeding and welfare arrangements generally on the L. of C. was overdue.

It was not, however, possible to start this re-organization for lack of men, as all British personnel likely to be available were to be absorbed in the formation of H.Q., L. of C. Command, and the re-organization of Headquarters, L. of C. Areas and Sub Areas. I had, therefore, to defer these measures until the manpower situation had improved.

*Changes affecting East African Forces.*

139. (a) It was necessary to re-organize 11 (East African) Division to bring it as far as possible into line with an Indian Standard Division.

(b) 22 and 28 (East African) Brigades, which formed part of the garrison of Ceylon, were on a different establishment from the brigades of 11 (East African) Division. It was always my intention to re-organize these two Brigades so that they should be inter-changeable with those of 11 Division. It has not, however, been practicable to make this change.

I foresaw, however, that additional brigades would be needed both in Fourteenth Army and 15 Indian Corps. I therefore arranged to withdraw 22 and 28 (East African) Brigades from Ceylon. This left Ceylon with three locally enlisted battalions only.

*Re-organization of Armoured Formations.*

140. I mentioned in my first Despatch that major changes in the organization of tank brigades were necessary and that—

(a) all regiments should be re-equipped with medium tanks,

(b) a troop of flame-throwers should be included in each squadron, and

(c) an infantry battalion should be included in each brigade.

The Commander-in-Chief, India, has agreed to this re-organization and an infantry battalion has been provided for each brigade, but we are still short of medium and flame-throwing tanks.

*Command Changes.*

141. There are two other important changes, the policy in regard to which was decided while I was Commander-in-Chief, 11 Army Group, although it was not put into effect until after I had left. Since, however, I was closely associated with this policy, I should, I consider, mention these two changes in this Despatch. The first was the appointment of an Allied Land Commander-in-Chief. The second was the transfer of Headquarters, Allied Land Forces to the vicinity of Calcutta.

142. As long as General Stilwell operated under the command of General Slim no difficulties regarding command arose. When, however, General Stilwell came under the direct command of the Supreme Allied Commander, there was a duplicate chain of command as General Slim operated under my orders and General Stilwell under the Supreme Allied

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