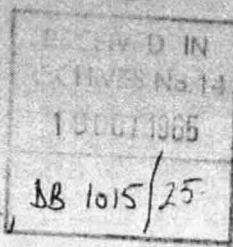


CONFIDENTIAL

Euler



1013/65



BRITISH EMBASSY,
RANGOON.

12 October, 1965.

Dear Serck, BB 1015/25

According to an announcement in the local press here on 5 September, the Frontier Areas Administration (F.A.A.) was to be abolished from the end of September 1965.

2. The F.A.A., which existed in Rangoon as a department of the office of the Chairman of the Revolutionary Council of Ministers, was established on 1 October, 1959 when General Ne Win was holding office as Prime Minister in the Army Caretaker Government. The areas which were specifically administered by the F.A.A. were mainly in the Kachin and Shan States, i.e. on Burma's eastern border with China. These originally comprised the Eastern Putao Frontier Division in the Kachin State; the Lawhkaung Frontier Division in the Kachin State; Kokang, Wa and Pansam areas in the Shan State. Later, in June 1960, Maungdaw Sub-division of Akyab District came under the F.A.A., until January 1964 when it reverted to its former administration. In July 1962 three areas, one in the Manghun Sub-division of the Shan State, and two in the Putao Sub-division of the Kachin State were added. The last area to be transferred to the F.A.A., in January 1963, was Kengtung State, one of Shan States.

3. According to the press report of its abolition, the F.A.A. was established to maintain friendly relations with neighbouring countries, to resolve boundary problems, to strive for the economic, educational and social development of the frontier people, to maintain and promote the Union spirit and to bring effective administration to the frontier areas. Of all these official reasons we believe that the F.A.A. was set up by a military government primarily to hold a watching brief over the frontier and the inhabitants. The F.A.A. officials on the ground would have direct access to their headquarters in the (then) Prime Minister's office. The Sino-Burmese Border Agreement signed in 1960 gave the F.A.A. the added task of smoothing over any border incidents, but, increasingly as time has gone on, it has obviated the necessity for maintaining a special frontier administration.

4. Although it is not specifically mentioned, another function of the F.A.A. was to promote the settlement of retired army personnel in their areas. Their presence was designed to encourage the economic and social development of the areas and to introduce some stability into places which either have been outside the administration of or have been traditionally hostile to central Burmese Government. The army offered

/generous

D. Tonkin, Esq.,
South East Asia Department,
Foreign Office,
S.W.1.

CONFIDENTIAL



generous loans and helped to provide facilities for these ex-army settlers whose main occupation, besides farming, is to act as a home-guard on the frontier.

5. On 19 April this year it was announced that the F.A.A. would be transferred from the Office of the Council of Ministers to the Ministry of Home Affairs. Since then, presumably, arrangements have been in hand for the frontier areas to be amalgamated with their appropriate contiguous districts. These are announced in the same notice as the abolition as follows: from 1 October, Kengtung, Mongtung and Tachilek frontier districts are to be amalgamated into Kengtung district, Kunlon frontier district is to become Kunlon district, East Putao frontier district is to be amalgamated with areas north of Myitkyina to become Putao district, and Lawhkaung frontier district to be incorporated in Myitkyina district.

6. The reversion of these frontier areas to the administration of their respective districts is no doubt largely an administrative rationalisation. But it also indicates that the situation on the Sino-Burmese border is now considered sufficiently stable to relieve the Government of the necessity of maintaining special arrangements to deal with frontier problems.

7. I am sending copies of this letter to David Moss in Bangkok and to the Chancery in Peking.

*Yours ever,
Donald*

(D.A. MacLeod)