

Secret Department
Confidential
Newsletter
No. 18
Dated 13th June 1841.

Intelligence
NorthWest Frontier.

Private letters from the NorthWest Frontier's agent contain the following items of intelligence dated from June 1st to June 10th. 1st. The 14th battalion led by Captain Graywill has been stationed in the Attock region. 2nd. Sikh deserters from General Avitable's legion have been seen roaming the hills of Peshawar. Their numbers are estimated to be around 100 men, and they are known to have an artillery installment.

General Avitable has been tracking them and will oversee their punishment upon capture. So far there are no reported casualties and the Sikh deserters do not appear to be hostile with their actions. 3rd. General Court and his troops are en route to Ludhiana in order to wait out the hot season. He states "There is no escaping the sun and intolerable humidity when marching for days at a time. It is in the battalion's best interest to wait out the coming months in Ludhiana." It is expected that they will reside in the Civil Lines.

4th. Maha Raja Sher Singh made it clear that his number one priority is to restore order within the Sikh army. The Maha Raja has issued formal statements to the Sikh troops, but the Sikh troops have remained uncooperative. By the discretion of General Avitable, the British will intervene when the Sikh troops in our ranks become too disorderly and rebellious. 5th. The Kafila family has been given a British military escort on their way to Peshawar. They have been overly loyal to the Company for decades and may be targets of local Sikh dissent. It is evident that Peshawar is in a sad state of organization. The Sikhs are becoming too much to handle for local troops and Captain Mackson does not believe that the Kafilas will be safe. It is important that the Kafilas remain in control of Peshawar as Master Kafila has stated, "we will follow any orders that the Company sees fit." Unfortunately, Captain Mackson and his battalions have requested to abandon Peshawar the moment the wealthy families and local tribe chieftains are pronounced out of danger. It is uncertain how long the Kafilas can be in control.

The poll agent at Peshawar writes that he had received notices from Major Broadfoot on the 4th of June that contained the following information. First, Major

Broadfoot has expressed great concern in the Sikh troops on the frontier. He is attempting to restore obedience in the troops, but states that their lack of confidence in the Maha Raja is preventing any progress. They miss Maha Raja Sher Singh's father, Runjeet Singh, and claim that they must follow in his beliefs as the true Maha Raja and Sikh emperor. Given the situation, Major Broadfoot thought it best to break up the Sikh battalions and "disperse them across British squadrons in order to avoid Sikh cooperation... and communication." In regards to his battalion's movements, Major Broadfoot engaged in a skirmish with the Ghilzis at Butkhak on June 1st. The attack was intended to "overawe" the Ghilzis, but they fought strong. According to the Broadfoot, his troops were tricked into believing the Ghilzis had retreated, only to be ambushed hours later in their encampment at Butkhak later that night. Broadfoot's forces suffered 1 casualty, and the enemy was known to suffer more than 5. He states that the Sikhs within his ranks fought valiantly, but is unsure if they will fight when placed up against their own people. Currently, Major Broadfoot and his troops are en route to Kabul and should arrive within the week.

From the Afghani diaries of the local agent it has been noted that the Maha Raja has sent a great supply drop to the Civil Lines in Jalalabad. Below is the inventory of his gift.

- 1.188,500 musket balls.
- 2.600 fuses
- 3.500 cannon shells
- 4.3000 rounds with 32 per

Additionally, the Maha Raja stated in a signed letter that he is willing to do whatever the British Government asks of him.

Gwalior.

From the Gwalior diaries, it appears that the President of Gwalior is unsatisfied with the lack of communication and little attention paid to Gwalior. Without Company approval, he has agreed to entertain an interview with the Maha Raja in his own estate on the 14th of June. They intend to discuss the British plan of action in terms of tension within the Sikhs.

It has been reported that an assemblage of a large party of armed men appeared on the outskirts of Gwalior on June 9th with hostile intentions. Captain Lafont and a squadron were dispatched to apprehend the men, but failed in their attempts as the hostiles fled into the hills. It remains unclear where the men have come from, but it is believed that they are deserters from the 35th infantry. They have been known to be causing trouble in the region, including the incident at Agra in which 5 British troops were killed and one of the deserters was apprehended. It appears that their numbers have grown to over 40 men in the past month, according to the report.

The President has personally wrote that two members of the royal family have arrived in Gwalior on June 5th and are staying in the greatest estate other than the President's own. Security has been raised in correspondence with their arrival and the guests intend to stay for several weeks before returning to the port of Bombay.

China.

The China Diary of the agent poll contained the following items of intelligence dated from May 31st to June 9th. 1st. The Governor of the Eastern settlements has purchased 250 tons of English coal. 2nd. A large supply of military stores was delivered aboard the "Sultan" from Singapore and contained the following:

- 1.500 common shells
- 2.20 cannons and artillery installments
- 3.10 tons of gunpowder
- 4.507 matchlocks
- 5.313 bayonet knives
- 6.500 muskets

3rd. The company's supply steamer, the "Atalanta", requires wide-ranging repairs and the Naval Commander in the region believes that a replacements ship is in order. The Commander is waiting on word from Bombay in order to be granted the new ship to be shared in the Atalanta's absence. The boat he had in mind was the "Esperanza", a similarly sized supply vessel.

4th. The "Nepaulin", one of our biggest ships at 719 tons, has been commissioned for military transport by the Naval Commander in the region.

5th. The high ground around the port of Canton remains secure as British troops continue to move up the Pearl River. These troops have seized 4 Chinese vessels along the way including a shipment that contained nearly 30 cannon installments. Commander-in-chief of our forces, Hugh Gough, remains in Canton in preparation for the move of a large naval force to northern China.

6th. After last month's victory in Canton, the tensions still remain high and Chinese militia have met us with great resistance. On the 4th of June, a crowd of over 10,000 Chinese gathered in Sanyuanli, a small village outside Canton, and proceeded to attack British troops

with pikes, machetes and large sticks. 4 of our men, 2 of which were Sepoys, perished in the attacks before the mob could be contained. Commander Hugh Gough has warned the local Governor that Canton will be burned to the ground if the populace is not contained.

7. 4 military ships, the Jersey, the Rigorous, the Trent and the Clarence arrived in the port of Canton on June 5th. 5 more ships are en route as well. Commander Hugh Gough is ready to move North with a large force along the coast and enter main land China through the Yangtze River along with 15 British vessels already stationed on the river. He believes that the war is coming to an end due to the economic pressures Britain has placed on the Chinese in Shanghai. No updates have been received from the troops there; however, it is believed that they have destroyed more than 10 Chinese tax barges and that the dynasty is struggling for finances. 8. It has been confirmed that all of the Chinese forts along the Indian Ocean between Canton and Bengal have been seized and secured by British forces. This includes the Bogue forts at the mouth of the Pearl River that have been under siege for over a month now.

An update from agent poll in the region contained the following information as well. A guild of over 20 Chinese merchants and fishermen came forth to the British troops stationed at the fort of Taipa near Macau. They expressed their displeasure in the Qing dynasty and say that the feeling is mutual amongst many other people. As of June 7th, negotiations are set to open trade with certain Chinese merchants outside of Macau and protect them from the Chinese troops that have banned such interactions. They have much to offer in silk and fine porcelain and wish to receive opium once again.

NorthEast Frontier.

The agents in the region have written updates on the following pieces of information from June 6th to June 11th. 1st. Major Augustine has moved into the Jaintia region with 5,000 troops and is close to full annexation of the region. The Governor of the region's house and possessions have been seized in an attempt to stifle all forms of resistance. 2nd. The provisional government in Cachar reports on deteriorating conditions in the region. After last month's monsoon, the plains remain flooded and un-farmable. The entire region of Silchar still remains underwater. These conditions have ruined all grain and rice growth in the region, and the economy is suffering. The farmers in the region have demanded tax breaks, but our provisional government cannot afford to lose the income. There is much angst amongst the people and our forces are maintaining a high level of security. 3rd. A conflict has developed in the Sylhet plains resulting in the deaths of 11 members of the Tungham clan. The 11 natives were serving as woodcutters in the hills for the company in Kuki territory when a group of 50 Kukis captured the men. The 11 men were executed according to the Kuki chief because "the company had not sent supplies for several years, so they could not enter the forest." Captain Wilson is standing down as a result of inferior troop numbers and unfamiliar knowledge of the region.

4th. At the request of the superintendent of Cachar, a party of 50 Sepoy soldiers has been dispatched to apprehend Prince Poothaji Sing. The Prince has led small skirmishes against the company's provisional government in the region that killed 2 British soldiers. According to the small party's report, our

soldiers surrounded Prince Sing on June 9th on a hill outside Silchar, but failed to apprehend the Prince. 5 of his men, including his brother are in captivity and no casualties were suffered. He is expected to have fled North to the mountains.

The regent in Manipur has reported a large increase in productivity from May. Gold, Ivory, Pepper and Cotton production has increased greatly and is proving profitable for the company. Furthermore, the company has formed an alliance with Gambir Singh, the son of the Meitei Raja in the region. Under the alliance, Singh has agreed to recruit troops in Sylhet for the company and the company will provide 2,000 muskets and supplies for the men. Singh will lead the men to push the Chinese militias away from the border.

-Eitan August
Secret Department Chief of Information

Secret Department
Confidential
Newsletter
No. 19
Dated 20th June 1841.

Intelligence

NorthWest Frontier.

Private letters from the NorthWest Frontier's agent contain the following items of intelligence dated from June 9th to June 18th. 1st. General Avitable reports that he has apprehended the nearly 100 deserters from his ranks on June 14th and has placed several of their higher ranking officers in military confinement. The followers shall be split up and returned to their respective squadrons within the Generals forces. 2nd. Captain Graywill was placed in charge of the escort of the Maha Raja to Gwalior for his meeting with the President of Gwalior. It was reported that the convoy encountered multiple angry mobs along the way, all of which directed their anger at the Maha Raja himself. "White lover" was a popular chant. The crowd never broke out into violence, however, and the Maha Raja has arrived safely in Gwalior. He remarked on the matter that he believes "what Britain is doing is the correct path for the Afghani people." 3rd. The British publication group, the "EIC Herald", has begun publishing their first magazines with the Maha Raja's permission for mass sale amongst the Sikh people. 4th. Captain Haringe reported that his troops engaged in a skirmish with a group of nearly 50 Sikh rebellions

entrenched in the village of Ferozeshah. The rebels did not appear to be deserters of our ranks, however, they fired several shots on Haringe's men when they were traversing the town. The Captain and his men advanced upon the enemy and captured 10 rebels before the rest fled. The enemy suffered 10 casualties, and Captain Haringe lost 4 due to the enemy's surprise attack. The 5 cannons have been confiscated as well. The prisoners are undergoing the process of questioning by Captain Haringe.

5. The troops in Peshawar have received orders from General Avitable to patrol the streets in light of heightened tensions in the city. On June 13th, 10 Sikh rebels killed a Sepoy soldier and proceeded to engage in a skirmish with British troops. Noticeably, the Sikh troops in the ranks failed to fire back on the rebellions. Captain Mackson is wary that the troops will be forced to turn on the Company once large-scale rebellions commence. Word within the camp is that the Sikh troops are very divided. Some wish to leave the ranks in Peshawar, but many wish to remain loyal to their posts. Measures have been taken to limit the level of information they receive on rebellions across the region, but it is difficult to censor information from such a large group of natives.

Updates from Major Broadfoot were received on June 10th about his current position and a recent battle his troops engaged in with Afghan rebels. On the battalion's return journey to Kabul they were met with heavy resistance from rebels. According to Broadfoot, "The enemy held the heights, and retreated upon the advancement of our troops." Broadfoot commanded a 3-flank march to surround the enemy, however, the left flank was poorly managed and Lieutenant King was killed in combat. After a valiant advance by Lieutenant

Mackenzie, the Company overran the enemy into retreating into the Khurd valley. During the retreat, Major Broadfoot and his men captured a rebel officer and detained him for questioning. He stated, "The officer is aware of over 10,000 Afghani rebels in the region and believes that the Sikh troops will join their ranks soon enough." Major Broadfoot stressed the importance of maintaining their loyalty once again. Currently, Major Broadfoot is in pursuit of rebels in the region and has requested the service of 400 more British troops from Kabul. He believes that pursuing them into the rougher terrain can be very challenging for the camels and movement of artillery installments, and will choose to wait out the enemy in more populace regions at his own discretion.

Gwalior.

The President of Gwalior reports that in his interview with the Maha Raja on June 14th the Maha Raja expressed his displeasure with the state of Afghanistan. He is fearful of his people getting closer to war and does not believe that unity with the British can be attained. Additionally, he is concerned that he will not remain in power much longer due to the discontent of his people. He stated, "I don't have say in the affairs of the Sikh anymore" and continued to say that he is "...willing to comply with all British commands in order to maintain balance in the region." The President assured him that the company has control of the region.

Captain Lafont reports that on June 16th he apprehended over 15 Sikh deserters from the 35th infantry that had been attacking the region for the last month. One of Lafont's squadrons stumbled upon

the rebels' camp in the hills and reported back to the battalion to coordinate a surprise attack. The company was met with no resistance as they pushed into the enemy camp, forcing the enemy into retreat. The deserters claim that they are the only rebels in the region, but Lafont is keeping his troops at the ready. The prisoners are being sent back to Kanpur for imprisonment.

In lighter news, the President and the royal family members partook in an elephant outing on June 13th. The royal family girls loved the creatures and claimed that India is the jewel of the British Empire. They say that they wish to stay in Gwalior a week longer than expected. Additional guards have been prepared for this request.

China.

The China diary of the agent poll in the region contained the following items of intelligence dated from June 9th to June 17th. 1st. The "Worcester" has been decommissioned temporarily for repairs and the "Mermaid" is being used as a substitute for transport until the ship is ready for open waters once again. 2nd. The "Royal", the "Gleaner", the "Orion", and the "Arundel" have all arrived in Canton in preparation for the move North to the Yangtze river. Commander in Chief Hugh Gough is planning to leave on the 21st of June to meet up with 15 other ships already in the North of China.

3rd. The Governor of Canton replied to the Commander's order to end the rioting in the region, stating that he has obeyed knowing the weight of the British threat and power of our armies. The Governor has been now been deemed a traitor by the citizens of

Canton and excessive force may have to be taken to contain the masses. No crowd has gathered since the 4th of June, but tensions remain high in the city.

Military patrols have been installed for all hours of the day in every major village to quell the thoughts of riot. 4th. Captain Gerrard reports that, after being met with great resistance, he and his battalion have captured Changsha fort in Honghai Bay along with the Chinese troops located there. Unfortunately, Gerrard's ship suffered major damages during the battle and will need to undergo repairs. He requested to make use of the transport vessel, the "Pearl", until his military vessel is properly repaired. During the skirmish, 3 Chinese ships were destroyed and dozens of men killed. The remaining inhabitants of the fort are en route to Canton for captivity.

Commander Wilshere has reported that the company is progressing greatly in the North in efforts to stop the Chinese government's activities. The 15 ships in the Yengtze River have destroyed nearly 20 Chinese tax barges sailing the river in the last 2 months. It is evident that the Chinese have taken heavy financial losses as a result as they are meeting more often with company diplomats to discuss neutrality terms for non-military ships. The Commander in the region has denied these requests, however, and is continuing to sink all Chinese government vessels in the river. In addition to this, the company has sunk nearly 10 Chinese naval ships, and only suffered the loss of the "Manchester." A fort was raided near the port of Shanghai on June 11th that contained the following items:

- 1.20 naval cannon installments
- 2.100 cannon balls
- 3.80 tons of gun powder

With the capture of the fort, diplomats believe that the British have a strong enough hold on the region that Opium trade can resume in the area with military escort. It is well known that Opium remains in high demand amongst the people of China and there is little that the government can do to regulate the ban on Opium with a strong British presence in the region.

NorthEast Frontier.

The agents in the region have written updates on the following pieces of information from June 10th to June 16th. 1st. The situation in Cachar has deteriorated as the farmers have gone on strike in light of the increased demands for taxation and no methods for farming. According to the farmers, it will take a whole year for the fields to be farmable once again. Over 500 farmers and their families have gathered in Lakhipur in protest. No violence has been reported, but the lack of laborers, food and materials to trade is taking a toll on the company's finances. 2nd. Prince Poohaji Sing has been found dead and abandoned in the paddy fields outside Silchar. He appeared to have suffered a gunshot wound most likely from the skirmish on June 9th. 3rd. In his efforts to move East, Major Augustine has found that the region is not as forgiving as Western India and that there are little resources to be attained near the border of Burma. He states that his "men are having trouble navigating the thick forests and high altitudes." It appears that the region is not as flat as western India, which puts our forces at a severe disadvantage. Major Augustine believes that the company will not be able to expand much further

without severe casualties against the Burmese forces or a larger army and requests a larger force to move deeper into Burma after Jaintia is secured.

4th. In the fields of Manipur, the company and natives have begun the growing of coffee and sugar; two resources that are new to the region. Additionally, with such a vast quantity of open land, the company has begun giving land grants to farmers willing to tend the farms in exchange for a fee. The region has already proven to be profitable in other products, and there are no signs of this productivity diminishing.

5th. The Kukis are proving to be troublesome for the company as they are impeding the expansion of British forces and continue to raid company controlled villages. On June 12th, they burned the small village of Oinam to the ground and were met with little resistance. The superintendent in Manipur and his limited men are having difficulty containing the enemy as the British troops are so spread out over the region. The superintendent has requested more forces in addition to the requests of Major Augustine.

Gambir Singh has written personally that he has recruited over 3,000 native men to serve for the company and requests 1,500 more rifles for his new recruits. He is currently advancing on the Kukis in the plains and believes that his forces greatly outnumber those of the Kukis. He has been met with little resistance as small bans are being pushed farther and farther North. Additionally, he has stated that he will extinguish the Naga tribesmen and Burmese troops in the region. Rifles, ammunition and supplies are currently en route to his battalion.

-Eitan August
Secret Department Chief of Information

Annotated Bibliography

Broadfoot, George. *The Career of Major George Broadfoot in Afghanistan and the Punjab*.

John Murray. 1888. Web. 25 March 2015. This primary source is a collection of letters and notes that Major Broadfoot wrote from 1841-1845 while serving as a Major in the East India Company. From 1841 to 1842, he served in Afghanistan as a Major in the first Afghan war before moving to the Punjab in 1844 to command troops in the events leading up to the Sikh wars. He describes in detail the many battles and strategies that he took part in, as well as his travels throughout the countries with his troops. The source also includes commentary from John Murray to provide context to Broadfoot's letters.

Broadfoot's letters coincide with the time period of the Confidential Newsletters and Major Broadfoot is mentioned often in the Confidential Newsletters. Broadfoot's recount of battles will help me to write similar updates in my newsletters about troop movements and the Afghan front. Additionally, I can use information on Broadfoot in this source to continue the description of Broadfoot's updates in the Confidential Newsletters. The context provided by this source also further allows me to understand updates in the Confidential Newsletters.

Cederlöf, Gunnel. *Founding an Empire on India's North-Eastern Frontiers, 1790-1840 :*

Climate, Commerce, Polity. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014. Print.

Cederlof's book describes in detail the transition of the East India Company from a commercial business to the dominant ruling power in the Northeast frontier of

India, specifically in regions like Sylhet, Cachar, Manipur and Jaintia. He talks in great depth about trade and commerce, bureaucratic control, war and the expansion of territories from 1790-1840. Overall, it is evident from Cederlof's source that the evolution of the East India Company in this territory was conflict ridden and posed many issues for both the British and native groups.

Although Cederlof's writings focus specifically on the Northeastern frontier of India, they provide information on many of the East India Company's affairs and conflicts in the region that were also present all throughout Asia. The information presented on what the East India Company had to do in order to remain in power will be useful in writing anecdotes and updates in my own newsletters. It is hard to work solely off of the actual Confidential Newsletters because much of the information presented is out of context and about people and affairs unknown to the reader. Cederlof's source will allow me to fill some of these gaps with fictional, but historically accurate information.

History of the campaign on the Sutlej and the war in Punjaub .. : including copious original information memoirs of many distinguished officers, English and foreign, and official lists of the killed and wounded officers and privates. London, 1846. *The Making of the Modern World.* Web. 25 March 2015. The *History of the campaign on the Sutlej and the war in Punjaub...* discusses in great depth Runjeet Shah and his successors, including one of his sons and third successor, Maharaja Sher Singh. The source first goes into detail about the territories that Runjeet took control of as Maharaja of the Sikhs and eventually leads into relations with the British and the eventual Sikh wars.

Although Runjeet died before the war, his actions were monumental in the preceding events. All of the causes, battles, generals of the British and Sikhs, players, and strategy as well as outcomes of the war are discussed in great detail in this source.

The Confidential Newsletters of 1841 mention Maharaja Sher Singh and the Sikhs often, as well as small skirmishes and tensions leading up to the start of the war in 1845. I think that this source provides detailed background information on Maharaja Sher Singh and his relationship with the British that would be useful in formulating a historically accurate portrayal of the Maharaja and the British in my own project. The description of the contrast in opinions of Sher Singh and his Sikh army will be quite useful in writing my own blogs, as well as helping me to further understand the Confidential Newsletters.

India Secret Department. "Confidential Newsletters." 1841. MS. Duke University Libraries, Durham. 23 March 2015. Print. The Confidential Newsletters of 1841 by the India Secret Department offer a glimpse into what the affairs of the British East India Company in Asia were at this time. The number of letters in the collection is 7, numbered as 12, 13, 15, 17, 25, 27 and 36. Each letter contains a dated title page followed by an update on British affairs in the "Northwest Frontier" of Asia. Following the Northwest Frontier is updates on other sections of Asia including Nipal, Peshawar, Gwalior, Burmah and China amongst other locations. Within each update are 3rd person descriptions of several days of events with each event dated. All of the updates amongst the seven letters fall within May of 1841 to July of 1841.

The updates are across all ranges of topics including naval ships, moving troops, royal family visits, wanted persons, supply inventories as well as updates on Asian leaders like Maha Raja Sher Singh.

Because my project will follow the format of the Confidential Newsletters, the newsletters format and subject material will be invaluable in creating my own additions to the collection of letters. I plan on creating similar title pages as well as updates on the same locations. My subject material, will follow the general themes of the newsletters such as troop movements, fortresses and wanted persons. Additionally, I will imitate the writing style of these newsletters in order to have a very formal, concise and factual approach to my own newsletters.