

(M. K. Rahman),  
Pleader,  
Ex-President,  
Singapore Muslim Association (Central)  
Kuala Lumpur.

(A. Jashar),  
Ex-Parliamentary Secretary,  
& President,  
Kuala Lumpur Muslim Organisation,  
Kuala Lumpur.

(M. Abdul Kadir),  
Ex-M.P.,  
President,  
Kampuchese Muslim Association,  
Kampuchea,  
President,  
Kuala Lumpur Muslim Organisation,  
Kuala Lumpur.

To,

The Chairman and Members,  
Statehood Consultative Committee.

Sirs,

We beg to avail of this opportunity to extend to you all on behalf of the Arakanese Muslim Community, our warmest and heartiest welcome and to offer our whole-hearted co-operation in the work entrusted to you by our beloved and benevolent Prime Minister.

We fully appreciate the noble desire of Prime Minister U Nu, to establish unity in diversity within the Union in the interest of national solidarity, and we must here record our grateful appreciation of the fact that while, in pursuit of the said desire, Prime Minister, U Nu, promised Statehood for Arakan if the people in the area express a genuine desire for it, he took care to allay the fears and suspicions of the minorities by laying down the additional condition that the State must be established, if at all, in a manner which will ensure peace, harmony, understanding, happiness and welfare of all who inhabit this area. The Arakanese Muslims who form the largest minority in Arakan, numbering well over 500,000, owe a deep debt of gratitude to the Prime Minister for his solicitude for their welfare as expressed in the above condition which he laid down in course of his Policy Speech in Parliament soon after assuming power.

Being desirous of falling in line with the Policy of the Prime Minister with regard to Statehood, and being aware of the fact that autonomy for Arakan is the hearts-desire of a large section of the Arakanese Buddhist Community, and, at the same time, being no less aware of the racial rivalry hatred and animosities still lingering between the two major communities after a lapse of nearly two decades since the blood bath of 1942, we felt constrained to exercise our minds with a view to finding a solution which would not only help to disarm the natural and genuine fear, suspicion and distrust entertained by the Muslim minority with regard to the safety and security of their rights and privileges, including the security of their life and property but also help to establish harmony and understanding between these two communities, which we consider vital for the well-being of all in Arakan, and which would satisfy one of the conditions laid down by the Prime Minister for the grant of Statehood.

Three alternatives readily suggest themselves to the mind: (1) To create two autonomous States —

- (i) Arakanese Muslim State comprising of  
Maya Frontier District and
- (ii) Arakan State comprising the rest of Arakan.
- (2) To create one autonomous Arakan State including  
Maya Frontier District with adequate and effective  
safeguards for the Muslims guaranteed in the  
Constitution of the State.
- (3) To leave out Maya Frontier District from the  
proposed Arakan State.

The last alternative mentioned above is altogether unthinkable since it means denial of autonomy to the Muslim majority area while the Arakanese Buddhist area forming the rest of Arakan would be enjoying autonomy. This will undoubtedly lead to such heart-burning, and the Muslims would be led to feel that they have been discriminated against and treated unjustly. If Arakanese Buddhists who are closely related to the Burmese clamour for autonomy, there is all the more reason for the Muslims to evince a strong desire for it since they are distinct from all other races in Burma in all respects, the only affinity between them and other races being their common citizenship and loyalty. Such being the case this alternative will be rejected by the Muslims outright.

The first alternative above offers in our humble opinion an ideal solution. If two brothers cannot live together they must live apart independently of each other. This will ensure peace and harmony as desired by the Prime Minister, and would fit in with the scheme of creating unity in diversity. Apart from the fact that the Muslims form a distinct ethnical group with different custom, culture, history and religion from the rest of the people in Arakan, their number in the Mayu Frontier area alone is estimated to be 500,000 (which almost equals the population of Karen State and is many more than the population of Chin Special Division, and also is more than the combined population of Kyaukpadaung and Sandoway Districts). Moreover, Maungdaw and Buthidaung Townships forming the major part of this Frontier District have the distinction of standing first and third respectively in order of merit so far as Revenue Collection in the District of Akyab is concerned. Although the Muslims never set up a Kingdom in Arakan, a reference to the History of Burma or to Burma Gazetteer, Akyab District, Vol. A, would clearly reveal that at one time Muslims were king-makers in Arakan and Min Saw Man, King of Arakan, who took refuge in Bengal was restored to his throne with the help of Muslim Army. It is also a matter of recorded history that the Muslim General Shayista Khan once invaded and occupied part of Arakan. The Muslim populace of Mayu Frontier District is very energetic, enterprising and hard working and is in no way inferior to the hill tribes now enjoying autonomy. Evidently, therefore the Muslims have a strong case for a state of their own, which if granted, they can no doubt run with great efficiency.

Although fully conscious of the right to claim such a Muslim State, we have felt, in view of the conciliatory attitude adopted by the Arakanese Buddhist leaders towards the Muslims, that if the Muslims' legitimate rights and privileges could be effectively safeguarded for all time to come, it would be in the best interest of all concerned, including the Muslims scattered all over Arakan, to be in the proposed Arakan State, which, on account of its greater resources and larger size, has a better chance of survival. That is the second alternative mentioned above. The Muslims' only apprehension of the majority community trying to defeat their rights and privileges by reason of their majority in the State Council could be laid at rest by such constitutional guarantees as would effectively prevent them from being trampled upon by majority vote.

We are glad to say that the top Arakanese Buddhist leaders have assured us verbally that the Muslims' rights and privileges would be safeguarded in the event of the creation of the State, and we are grateful to them for such assurances which we deeply appreciate. With a view to obviating any possibility of dispute and contention at a future date as to these rights and privileges and to ensure their safety under all circumstances and for all time to come, we have presented to the Arakanese Buddhist leaders (Arakan Statehood Joint Committee) our demands as contained in Appendix A attached hereto. We are given to understand,

The first alternative above offers in our humble opinion an ideal solution. If two brothers cannot live together they must live apart independently of each other. This will ensure peace and harmony as desired by the Prime Minister, and would fit in with the scheme of creating unity in diversity. Apart from the fact that the Muslims form a distinct ethnical group with different custom, culture, history and religion from the rest of the people in Arakan, their number in the Mayu Frontier area alone is estimated to be 500,000 (which almost equals the population of Karen State and is many more than the population of Chin Special Division, and also is more than the combined population of Kyaukpyu and Sandoway Districts). Moreover, Maungdaw and Bathidaung Townships forming the major part of this Frontier District have the distinction of standing first and third respectively in order of merit so far as Revenue Collection in the District of Akyab is concerned. Although the Muslims never set up a Kingdom in Arakan, a reference to the History of Burma or to Burma Gazetteer, Akyab District, Vol.A, would clearly reveal that at one time Muslims were king-makers in Arakan and Min Saw Mun, King of Arakan, who took refuge in Bengal was restored to his throne with the help of Muslim Army. It is also a matter of recorded history that the Muslim General Shayista Khan once invaded and occupied part of Arakan. The Muslim populace of Mayu Frontier District is very energetic, enterprising and hard working and is in no way inferior to the hill tribes now enjoying autonomy. Evidently, therefore the Muslims have a strong case for a state of their own, which if granted, they can no doubt run with great efficiency.