

## CORRESPONDENCE

August 4, 1981

Dear Mr Kapadia,

I was surprised to see in H.J. 37 that the Siachen Glacier was 'the longest glacier in the world'.<sup>1</sup> This just is not true. For instance, the Hubbard glacier in Alaska is double the length of the Siachen, being 92 miles long. This I know as a fact, being a member of the party that first discovered and mapped the whole of the Hubbard. On that same expedition we discovered several other glaciers of equal or superior length to the Siachen. The huge glaciers of the Yukon and Alaska are the greatest glaciers in temperate regions (probably 15 to 20 of them longer than the Siachen). In the polar glaciers, there are even longer ones. I forget the length of the Beardmore Glacier in Antarctica.

H. ADAMS CARTER

7 September, 1981

My Dear Harish,

Kindly refer to your letter dated 21 October, 1981 regarding Siachen Glacier. I have checked with C. P. Vohra, the top glaciologist of India, who informs me that my contention was correct, till the Russians surveyed the Pamir glaciers and found Fedchenku to be longer than Siachen, which is now the second largest glacier. According to him the glaciers mentioned by H. Adams Carter are not relevant in present-day valley glaciers which we are talking about. Those are ice sheets which come in different category altogether.

N. KUMAR

19 September, 1981

Dear Mr Kapadia,

However, unless Stockholm and Oslo are in the Polar regions, I cannot but disagree violently with Colonel Kumar on the placement of the Alaskan glaciers, since they lie on just about the same latitude. To be sure, Alaska, Norway and Sweden all extend into the Arctic, but I believe that geographers the world over accept that the polar regions begin at the Arctic Circle and not at 60°N latitude, the

1. See H.J. 37, p. 107.—Ed.

approximate latitude of the great Alaskan glaciers, Oslo and Stockholm. They all lie in the Temperate Zone, seven degrees south of the Arctic Circle.

Certainly the Siachen Glacier is not 'the world's largest'. It is not the largest in the temperate zone by far. I don't know the thickness of any (therefore the total ice mass) but the Siachen cannot have the surface area of the Malaspina Glacier [some 60 kms long and 50 (!) kms across; i.e., 3000 sq. kms] or of the Hubbard Glacier (145 kms long and nowhere less than 5 kms across; the tongue is 9 kms across; i.e., 775 kms.). This would seem to be much more than the Siachen (72 kms long and some 4 kms across, i.e., 288 sq. kms).

As for length, the Siachen's 72 kms (or 45 miles as quoted by Kenneth Mason in 'Abode of Snow') is much shorter than the following, which I have hurriedly selected:

Hubbard	145 kms
Bagley	130 kms
Logan	95 kms
Seward	83 kms
Bering	75 kms
Walsh	75 kms
Lowell	75 kms

All but the Lowell Glacier, which is entirely in the Yukon, are either in Alaska or in Alaska and the Yukon.

H. ADAMS CARTER