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THE CROWN JEWEL:
HISTORY, MEMORY AND THE 1941 INVASION OF PERSIA

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

2016

ABSTRACT

In August 1941, the territory of Persia was jointly invaded by Britain and the Soviet Union, a event now largely forgotten. The invasion took place less than two months after the launch of Operation Barbarossa by Hitler, and at the time there was a widely held view that the Wehrmacht's successes in the West would be replicated in the East. Historical accounts generally identify three reasons behind the British decision to invade. Those reasons are: (1) the (vague) "German threat" comprising sabotage, insurgency and damage to British interests in the country; (2) the strategic British-controlled oil assets and the refinery at Abadan; and (3) the ability to supply materiel to the Soviet Union via the so-called "Persian Corridor". What most accounts of the invasion do not refer to is the defence of India as a component in the British decision to invade. I review a number of primary and secondary materials – the history of British Imperial interests in Persia, British archives, Indian military history and mass media accounts – which all clearly show the defence of India as a key factor in the decision to invade. I then consider the reasons why the defence of India has slipped from the historical narrative. My analysis draws on a number of the ideas and concepts from the field of memory studies, including thinking about the function of collective memory. I propose that the rapid and dramatic act of Indian independence in 1947, combined with the change in normative attitudes towards Imperialism and the British Empire postwar, resulted in the narrative of the Second World War being the preferred basis for subsequent and contemporary accounts of the invasion, to the exclusion of Imperial factors.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that the research presented here is my own original work and has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of a degree.

Andre John Wierzbicki
2 January 2016

The English have a great and obvious interest in maintaining and improving the strength of Persia as a barrier to India.

Sir John Malcolm, 1806

Were it not for our possession of India we should trouble ourselves but little about Persia.

Lord Salisbury, 1889

I know it is not so; but I also know that on my deathbed I shall still be believing with one part of my brain that somewhere on every ocean of the world there is a great grey ship with three funnels and 16-inch guns which can blow out of the water any other navy which is likely to face it.

Enoch Powell, 1991

A personal connection with the exotic, mysterious and romantic Persia set the path that led to this thesis. My father and his family were among tens of thousands of Polish civilians who were forcibly “resettled” to the USSR at the outbreak of the Second World War. In the aftermath of Operation Barbarossa, these Poles (mostly women and children) were freed under an amnesty granted by Stalin, and were directed by the Allies to Persia, along with the surviving men who became the Second Polish Corps, under General Anders.¹ My father was only a very young boy, but his memories of that time laid the stones of my own Persian mosaic; pomegranates picked from the orchards of the Shah and the profound generosity of Isfahani hospitality still resonate within my own personal history of the 1941 invasion.²

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INTRODUCTION

On 25 August 1941, just shy of the second anniversary of the outbreak of war, Persia³ was jointly invaded by Great Britain and the Soviet Union. The invasion occurred only weeks after the launch of Operation Barbarossa by Nazi Germany, and came at a time when the Wehrmacht and its panzers were in the ascendency. The British troops entered the country from the sea, and the Russians from the north. This was the first and only time in history where a Western power and the Soviet Union joined hands in such an endeavour. At the time of the invasion, Persia had declared its neutrality in the war. The breadth of the Second World War panorama, subsequent monolithic Cold War narrative and the post-1979 history of Iran have all served to overshadow this episode within Anglophone historiography and memory.

The invasion, known by the British as Operation Countenance⁴, involved an extremely brief campaign of little military significance and few casualties (numbering less than 100 on the Allied side⁵). The Allied (British, Indians, Australians and, later, Poles and Americans) and Soviet forces occupied, partitioned and remained in Persia for the duration of the war. What was known as the Persian Corridor supply route (shipping supplies via the Persian Gulf then truck or rail to the USSR), after 1942, became the second largest source of US materiel to the Soviet Union.⁶

Unsurprisingly, wartime occupation had a significant and negative impact on Persia and the average Persian, in the form of inflation, food shortages⁷, instability and civil unrest.⁸ It also marked the beginnings of an American presence in the region, and

distaste for this on the part of Persia when coupled with over a century of British and Russian condescension. This set the tone for that which was to have such significant consequences in latter part of the twentieth century and onwards to our present time.

For Britain, the decision to invade involved several considerations. I will argue that one of the primary considerations was the defence of India, at the time the crown jewel of the British Empire. This factor has received scant attention in postwar and contemporary war historiography, to the extent that it has disappeared from many accounts of the invasion. I will demonstrate that there is a large body of evidence to support this conclusion. This evidence can be found in a number of places. Although only a small corner of the second great global conflagration of the twentieth century, the 1941 invasion is important. Today's Iran is at or near the epicenter of contemporary global geostrategic considerations. The history of Western involvement in the country is fundamental to a proper understanding of the forces and complexities that shape our world today. Further, I will show that it provides an illustration of the way in which history is constructed and the profoundly human forces that shape its narrative.

In Chapter 1, I undertake a literature review, including a review of memoirs and autobiography from participants and decision-makers at the time. In Chapter 2, I review the long history of British Imperial policy towards Persia, as a bulwark or defensive outworks of India. This provides context and a logical Imperial policy continuum, and the invasion is a clear extrapolation of this. The invasion of Persia

within the framework of Imperial concerns was not “out of the blue” in 1941, but rather part of a long and well understood strategic framework.

In Chapter 3, I examine the specific identification of the defence of India in the archival materials from 1941, leading up to the decision to invade. I have used UK archival materials from the public and private papers of the British individuals central to the decision-making process in 1941 to consider this. These have included the archival materials of Sir Winston Churchill (Churchill College, Cambridge), Sir John Dill⁹ (Kings College, London), Clement Attlee¹⁰ (Bodleian Library, Oxford), Sir Reader Bullard¹¹ (St Anthony’s College, Oxford) and Leopold Amery¹² (Churchill College, Cambridge). In addition, I have used various governmental and quasi-governmental archive materials from 1941 held at the National Archives in Kew.

In Chapter 4, I review the official Indian military history, and show the specific military planning and activities undertaken in India in 1941 that were designed to address an invasion from Persia.

In Chapter 5, I consider the mass media coverage of the invasion from the time. That review shows repeated and specific mention of the defence of India as a driver for the invasion. Virtually all of the mass media accounts refer to Persia as the “gates of India” – a phrase which directly links to the concerns of Imperial policy discussed in Chapter 2.

In the final chapter, I consider the question of why the defence of India has received such scant attention in accounts of the Persian invasion. In doing so, I will draw upon a number of the concepts and thinking from the field of memory studies and offer a series of propositions which may help to explain this. I also reflect on the particular place that Winston Churchill's account of the invasion holds when considered in light of subsequent historiography, and what this tells us about the nature of history making.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

I will use Winston Churchill's account of the invasion in his history, *The Second World War*, as the starting point for this literature review. I do so as Churchill's account was the first to be published postwar. It also offers the most lengthy consideration of the invasion of Persia. Churchill's account appears in the third volume of *The Second World War*, a volume entitled *The Grand Alliance*. For reasons that are not clear, this is divided into two books, with book one comprising twenty chapters and book two, seventeen. The chapter entitled "Persia and the Middle East – Summer and Autumn 1941" appears as Chapter 26. David Reynolds, in his seminal analysis of the construction of *The Second World War*, provides some helpful context for the writing of these chapters. He comments that: "Book Two of *The Grand Alliance* lacks a firm intellectual structure, particularly in the middle".¹³ Reynolds remarks that *The Grand Alliance* was considered at the time of publication the weakest and most difficult of the volumes as it relates to its chosen themes. The sections which cover the invasion are, even for Churchill's style, heavily reliant on long quotations from official and semi-official communications and telegrams.¹⁴ According to Reynolds, the bulk of *The Grand Alliance* (in particular in relation to the second half of 1941) was drafted in the period between mid-1948 and 1949.¹⁵ While this post-dates the grant of independence to India in 1947, I would suggest that Churchill's disdain for that process and his hardened views on India and Empire (discussed in the final chapter) allow a treatment of his work as the sole contribution to the body of historiography that pre-dates the end of the Raj in 1947.

What then does Churchill say about the invasion? The nine or ten consecutive pages that are devoted to Persia contain thirteen extracts of telegrams or other communications, comprising around half of the total text. As Reynolds has remarked, the narrative and tone comprise a *mélange* of factors and themes that are often difficult in their presentation. The chapter opens with an immediate (albeit oblique) reference to geostrategic concerns and a reference to the importance of oil:

The need to pass munitions and supplies of all kinds to the Soviet Government and the extreme difficulties of the Arctic route, *together with future strategic possibilities*, made it eminently desirable to open the fullest communication with Russia through Persia. *The Persian oil fields were a prime war factor.*¹⁶ (my italics)

The chapter then continues on with a discussion about the need to expel Germans from Persia and petitions to the Persian government to that effect. A telegram from General Wavell¹⁷, Commander-in-Chief (India) at the time, then follows (note the reference to the uncertain state of Operation Barbarossa):

The complaisant attitude it is proposed to adopt over Iran appears to me incomprehensible. It is essential *to the defence of India* that Germans should be cleared out of Iran now ... To this end the strongest possible pressure should be applied forthwith while the issue of German-Russian struggle is still in doubt¹⁸ (my italics)

The narrative then continues with an overview of the specific military aspects of the invasion. In a telegram to Sir Reader Bullard (Minister to Tehran at the time) in early September 1941, Churchill writes:

We cannot tell how war in these regions will develop ... it is very likely that large British forces will be operating in and from Persia in 1942, and certainly a powerful Air Force will be installed.¹⁹

A communication from Churchill to Stalin on 12 October offers a further insight:

Our only interests in Persia are, first, as a barrier against German penetration eastward, and, secondly, as a through route for supplies to the Caspian basin.²⁰

What is frustrating here is that there is no additional commentary from Churchill on these extracts – the work is simply a compilation, lacking any analysis, thinking or reflection. This is to some extent of the function of the way Churchill wrote his memoirs, with the extensive use of his built-for-purpose wartime minutes and telegrams. As Reynolds has noted: “it was a common complaint of his American publishers that the volumes contained too much unrefined documentation”²¹. It may also well be the case that this approach was intentional. They do offer an accurate pastiche of the reasoning for the invasion, and their randomness in presentation was perhaps a function of the times. Churchill himself was certainly troubled by the competing historical themes and considerations of late 1941, which

marked the waning of the British role in the war and of Churchill's own powers as a result of his ailing health.²² As Reynolds, apropos 1941, has commented:

knowledge of Barbarossa ... serves to resolve the confusions of the first half of 1941, while anticipation of the victory at Stalingrad obscures the doubts about Soviet survival so prevalent in 1941 and 1942 ... [1941] was in reality a confused and confusing year.²³

Beyond Chapter 26, there are several other references to the invasion and the possible advance of the German Army towards India. In the following Chapter 27, Churchill cites a telegram to his Chef of Staff General Hastings Ismay in November 1941 stating: "We do not know when the Germans will arrive in the Caucasus, nor how long it will be before they come up against the mountain barrier ... I cannot feel any confidence that the Germans will be prevented from occupying the Baku oilfields".²⁴ On 24 October he told the Director of Military Intelligence he believed that the chance of Moscow falling before the winter was "even" and on 25 October that in a month or so Russia would be (temporarily) reduced to being a second-rate military power.²⁵ Finally, there is an interesting late omission from Chapter 26 identified by Reynolds' archival work (in an earlier draft) that warrants inclusion here:

In October 1949, he [Churchill] cut a reference to "the vague but increasing menace of a German passage across Turkey or a break-through in the Caucasus" and also emasculated the text of a major paper he had written for the Americans in January

1942. This was done “for reasons of space” he tells readers, but the main removed passage urged an Anglo-American army of some fifteen divisions to defend the Persian Gulf. If the Red Army collapsed in the Caucasus, Churchill warned his allies, “the loss of the oilfields of the Caspian and Persia, and of all the regions between the present Russian front *and the frontiers of India cannot be excluded from our thoughts*”.²⁶ (my italics)

In contrast to the Churchill account, subsequent postwar historiography that considers the Persian invasion in 1941 gives scant attention to the traditional place of India and the role of Imperial policy as a basis for the British decision to invade.²⁷ This is the case for both the vast pool of more general historical analysis of the war, the (limited) specific Persian theatre analysis, as well as autobiography and the memoirs of the dominant British figures of the time. Within all of these sources, three reasons for the invasion are identifiable and appear in similar guises in all.

The first reason offered for the invasion is the German threat, both specific to Persia and its foreign controlled assets, and ranging from intrigue, espionage and sabotage as a precursor to invasion via the Caucasus. The German threat was the publically and widely stated focus of British and Soviet pre-invasion diplomacy. The expulsion of German nationals from Persia was the formal justification for invasion offered to the soon-to-be deposed Shah, Reza Pahlavi, at the time.²⁸

Sir Reader Bullard was British Minister (Ambassador) to Tehran in 1941. Now largely forgotten, Bullard was a man of modest background who joined the consular service

after Cambridge. He had held posts across the Middle East and, more importantly, in Russia and spoke fluent Russian. Bullard wrote and published a number of works after his retirement on his experiences in the Middle East and Russia, and has been described by George Lenczowski as: “intelligent and erudite, firm and yet friendly, Sir Reader personified in his simple and unassuming manner all the best traditions of British diplomacy”.²⁹ Bullard’s published writings provide a detailed overview of the diplomatic tete-a-tete between the Soviets and British and the various demarchés presented to the Persians prior to the invasion. The account in Sir Reader’s diary gives credence to the level of concern (be it accurate or otherwise) felt about the German presence in Persia. One example that Bullard offers is the risk of German merchant marine being scuttled in the port of Bandar Shahpur and thereby blocking the entrance to the Shatt al Arab and the Port of Abadan (see Map 1).³⁰ This threat of a Fifth Column in Persia came on the back of the attempted Rashid Ali Al-Gaylani coup³¹ in Iraq in April 1941 and a raised threat level in the region stemming from the opening successes of Barbarossa. According to Bullard, the mass media coverage in Persia during the weeks between the launch of Barbarossa and the invasion is replete with shrill warnings and anxieties of the threat posed by Nazi spies.

The second reason offered for the invasion is the prospect of Persia being used as a corridor to supply the Soviet Union. Within days of the alliance with the Soviets and the famous radio broadcast by Churchill, there were continuous pleas for both men and materiel for the Eastern Front (or alternatively for a second front in France or elsewhere) in Soviet correspondence with London. This included repeated, direct

requests from Stalin to Churchill (in which Churchill charmingly and disarmingly addresses Stalin as Monsieur).

The third reason offered for the invasion is oil. This has a number of component parts. The protection of the British oil supply at Abadan (the location of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company refinery) and its assets was of great concern to Churchill, who had overseen the transition of the British Navy from coal to oil as First Lord of the Admiralty in the Great War. In addition, the maintenance of existing and future provision of oil to the Soviets, and the prevention of German access to the Caucasus and Baku, formed part of these concerns. The significance of strategic oil has been well established by historians such as Daniel Yergin³² and Sir Francis Hinsley³³. For the Wehrmacht, the Caucasus and Baku were key Barbarossa goals (despite this being subject to Hitler's fluid and variegated plans and differences of opinion with the German high command³⁴). Martin Kitchen's view³⁵ is that oil was the main concern in London at the time, and this is also broadly borne out by the archival evidence (the War Cabinet minutes from July 1941 state: "Iranian oil and the Abadan Refinery are essential to us").³⁶ There is no doubt that the oil riches of the Caucasus and beyond (together with the bountiful vastness of the Ukraine) represented a significant part of Hitler's thinking in his drive to the East.³⁷ In view of the archival evidence, this component of the trinity seems to be *primus inter pares* – it is by far the most explicit concern seen in the primary archival material. However, in the context of Iranian oil – that is, oil from Abadan – the Joint Intelligence Committee (the top intelligence assessment agency in the UK during the war) in June 1941 commented that: "Unless Germany can export oil by sea from the Persian Gulf she

cannot hope to obtain any relief to the European oil shortage from Iranian oil. The denial to ourselves of Iranian oil would therefore appear to be her objective, rather than its acquisition for herself".³⁸ Similarly, the Defence Committee (Operations) in July 1941 considered how the oil assets in Persia fitted with the broader strategic questions and the actions of Russia in defending against the Nazis:

Unless therefore, we can keep enemy air forces outside effective range it seems most unlikely that we can supply our forces in Iraq or export oil from Abadan, even if we succeed in keeping refinery and oil-field from destruction. It therefore seems essential that we should base our defence on holding Northern Iraq and Northern Iran, or at least prevent enemy from establishing himself there. This should not be impossible provided we have some adequate Air Forces, some armoured forces, and that Russia fights on to some degree and affords us co-operation.³⁹

In addition to the more general historical material, there is a small handful of invasion specific and Persian specific histories that consider the period. Generally, the English language and Western published materials are a product of their time – postwar, Cold War and postcolonial. The most recent analysis, *Sunrise at Abadan*, directly focuses on the Persian invasion in the context of the war. Published in 1988, it provides an extremely detailed and thorough analysis of the lead-up to and the actual military conflict itself (including a significant amount of new archival analysis and interviews with actual military participants, albeit minor ones).⁴⁰ The consideration given to the reasons for the invasion is not a focus, and is centered on the justifications for the invasion from an international law and moral perspective, in

particular US involvement leading up to the decision. There is no discussion of India as an element of the decision on the part of the British.

The historian Miron Rezun's *The Iranian Crisis of 1941* (1982)⁴¹ is critical of what he sees as the singular focus, derived from Churchill, on the supply route analysis.

Rezun makes far more of the German threat and the level of espionage and intelligence activity and "the consistent economic and political penetration of Iran by Nazi Germany".⁴² The use of both German and Russian language sources, in particular intelligence material, makes this work useful but narrow. In terms of specific British reasons, Rezun refers to strategic oil and to the interests of Britain in Persia albeit not as they related to the defence of India.

A number of works have as their primary focus the Soviet perspective in Persia and Central Asia. George Lenczowski's *Russia and the West in Iran* (1949)⁴³ and *Iran under the Pahlavis* (1978)⁴⁴; Walter Laqueur, *The Soviet Union and the Middle East* (1959)⁴⁵; Ivar Spector, *The Soviet Union and the Muslim World, 1917-1958* (1959)⁴⁶ and more recently, Martin Kitchen *British Policy Towards the Soviet Union during the Second World War* (1986)⁴⁷ and Martin Sicker *The Bear and the Lion: Soviet Imperialism and Iran* (1988)⁴⁸. As their dates of publication suggest, the Cold War thematic dominates and is reflected in the analysis and construction. Of these works, Lenczowski and Kitchen make the most explicit references to the invasion and its causes. Lenczowski refers to "typical" attitudes of the British, "faithful to their traditional long-range policy of treating Iran as a buffer between Russia and their possessions"⁴⁹ and Kitchen comments on a scenario where the Soviet Union was

defeated: “there seemed to be nothing to stop the Germans from sweeping on into the Middle East and India.⁵⁰ All of these sources tend to follow the broad reasoning identified above and present the decision as to invade as a *fait accompli*.

There are several official publications on the Persian theatre: *Paiforce: The Official Story of the Persia and Iraq Command 1941-1946*, issued for the UK War Office (1948)⁵¹ and *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, issued by the US Army (1952).⁵²

The latter provides a valuable narrative as well as a statistical account of the significance of the Persian Corridor supply route and detailed information on the logistics, types of materiel and associated engineering and infrastructure that was put in place, largely by the US. These publications offer an insight into the massive infrastructure contribution to Persia during the period of occupation – more than 4,000 miles of road and 29 airports were constructed.⁵³

There is a clearer identification of the place of Indian defence within war strategy in some Imperial histories. The historian Elizabeth Monroe comments that: “the broad outline of British strategy in the Middle East in the Second World War is true to type. India, for itself and as a base for the Indian army, was the prime asset to be defended; oil supplies for a potential theatre of war came second”⁵⁴. Monroe describes the invasion as intended to: “ward against the classic thrust towards India”.⁵⁵ Other Imperial histories are less direct in their identification of this issue. The *Oxford History of the British Empire* describes the Middle East theatre and the invasion of Iran as marking: “a revival of the British Empire in the Middle East”.⁵⁶

Surprisingly, very few memoirs from direct participants at the time exist. Anthony Eden⁵⁷, Foreign Secretary whose admiration and deference to Churchill is well known, published memoirs in 1965. Eden tracks the analysis of Churchill (albeit in barely two paragraphs) with a strong personal emphasis, and gives added weight to the German threat. It is in my view quite extraordinary that Eden, who was with Lord Mountbatten in India at the time of the grant of independence in 1947, fails to make mention of the defence of India concerns:

Having done what I could to ease relations between Poland and Russia as two sovereign states, the British and Soviet Governments had now to face the situation which had developed in Iran. German agents had been active there for some time, but now that the Soviets were under Nazi attack, the railway across the country became of capital importance as the only practicable land route from the Persian Gulf for the dispatch of supplies to Russia ... The Iranian route could not be secure while Nazi agents were free to subvert and sabotage. These men were formidable. We had recently had an experience of what they could do in Bulgaria and we dared not risk a repetition of growing German authority in the vital geographic area from which we drew our oil supplies. As a result, I accepted that the British and Soviet Governments had no choice except to exert pressure to expel these German agents. When this pressure failed, I reluctantly agreed to the forces of the two countries entering Iran from the south and north.⁵⁸

None of Churchill's Chief Staff Officer and close adviser General Hastings "Pug" Ismay⁵⁹, Clement Attlee, leader of the Labour party at the time⁶⁰, Churchill's Assistant Private Secretary Jock Colville⁶¹ and Sir Reader Bullard⁶² make specific

mention of reasons for the invasion or indeed the Persian theatre at all. The Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs Sir Alexander Cadogan⁶³ mentions the invasion only in passing, with no elaboration or discussion⁶⁴, and the memoirs of Lord Halifax⁶⁵ (at the time Ambassador to the United States) similarly makes no mention. General Sir John Dill did not survive the war, passing away in November 1944 while Chief of the Joint British Staff Mission to Washington. General Alan Brooke (albeit not made CIGS until after the invasion in December 1941) refers in his famous diaries to the defence of the “oil wells of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, on whose refineries, tankers and desert pipe lines all the British forces operating in this region depended”.⁶⁶ General Auchinleck did not produce any memoirs. General Archibald Wavell, regrettably, only produced memoirs from his time as Viceroy in 1943.⁶⁷

Taken as a whole, the trinity of reasons offered by historians for the invasion – the German threat, aid to Russia and strategic oil – are all accurate and I do not suggest otherwise. While certainly exaggerated at the time, that there existed a German threat is undoubted. Germany both prior to and after 1933 had designs on and was active in the Persian Gulf area. In the Great War, the espionage and counterintelligence activities of German agents in Persia and elsewhere in the Middle East (most memorably the actions of Wassmuss, the so-called “German Lawrence”⁶⁸) were well remembered by the British. The interwar period led to a massive increase in all aspects of German participation in Persian economics, finance, culture and politics. The desire on the part of the new Reza Shah Pahlavi to break from the Qajar dynasty’s weakness and find a “third” as a counterweight to

traditional Anglo-Russian interests was to favour Germany throughout this period.⁶⁹ By 1937, Germany was Persia's second largest trading partner and by 1939-1941 the largest, comprising almost half of total Persian foreign trade.⁷⁰ There was indeed an element of both Fifth Column and espionage activity undertaken by Germany in Persia during this time.⁷¹ However, the true nature of the threat presented by the presence of German Nationals in Persia in 1941 was based on exaggerated claims or poor information. Stalin referred to 6,000-7,000 German Nationals⁷² and Western press reports at the time put the number at 4,000-5,000). Yet by the time of the actual invasion, a detailed summation of the intelligence position was available to Military Intelligence and the Foreign Office in London:

[the Germans] did not appear to have much political influence as they had been unable to make the Shah take any steps to support Rashid Ali when he made his coup d'état in Iraq. In the War Office's weekly intelligence summary for 30 July and again on 4 August ... MI [Military Intelligence] had dismissed recent rumours to the effect that the Axis was preparing a rebellion or a coup: unless, as was unlikely, they were supported by the Iranian Army, the Germans as yet were in no position to undertake anything beyond sabotage, and the rumours were probably being put about by the Russians as a means of justifying an Anglo-Russian occupation. Between then and the Anglo-Russian occupation no reliable intelligence had been received which ran counter to this scepticism or cast doubt on the protestations of the Iranian government that its policy was to observe the strictest neutrality. On the contrary, the Italian diplomatic decrypts had disclosed in the second week of August that the German attempts to organise subversion in the Caucasus from Iran had run into difficulties and that the Iranian government was hoping that the first of the

Anglo-Russian demarches would induce the Axis 'to give up any suspicious activities which there might have been'. It was also clear that the Iranian government had imposed close supervision over the 'more formidable Germans'.⁷³

It is therefore necessary to think about the German threat in combination with the widely held belief of the British and the Americans (President Roosevelt was a foresighted contrarian on this point) that Russia would not hold out against the Nazi onslaught. This view was broadly held within both military and political circles. In part this was a function of ignorance as to the nature of Soviet military assets and preparedness. The closed nature of Russia since the rise of the Bolsheviks had meant that there was a lack of information and a perception of backwardness about the country. It was also a reflection of the experience of Blitzkrieg in the opening stanzas of the war and the awesome power of the German war machine. The level of concern in London as to the likely course of events in the East can be seen in the candid comments of Alexander Cadogan during the initial phases of Barbarossa. On 29 June he wrote in his diary: "Russians still seem to be inflicting some damage on Germans. The surprise Russian big tank [the T-34] seems to be a success. But we can't hope for too much". On 1 July he wrote: "... we are not prepared to take advantage of this Heaven-sent (and short) opportunity of the Germans being heavily engaged in Russia. We shall look awful fools!" and the next day: "Russians still being hammered, but they haven't absolutely gone up in smoke yet".⁷⁴ Llewellyn Woodward has commented:

These things are seen now in the light of after events. They were not so clear at the time. With few exceptions, the leading military authorities in Great Britain and the United States shared the German view that Russian large-scale resistance would not last long ... Even those German generals who regarded the campaign as a mistake thought that their armies would break the enemy before the end of the year.⁷⁵

The belief in the relative weakness of the Russian Army was also widely held within the German high command, as a consequence of intoxication at the easy successes in France, willful ignorance of Russian military capability, traditional (negative and patronizing) views of the Slavs held by the German Army, combined with the will of Hitler and his drive for the great territory of the East.⁷⁶ The chain and sequence of events is important in properly placing the defence of India concerns. If British decision-makers believed that Russia would not survive much past 1941, then what is the nature of the German threat that warranted the invasion?

The provision of aid to Russia also appears brittle under the weight of chronology. The benefit of hindsight, the value of the supply route that the Persian Corridor *was to become* could be described as a bonus in the postwar analysis of the invasion. US Army records from the time show that the volume of materiel transported via the Persian Corridor by both the US and the British during 1941 until May 1942 was limited, constituting between 5-10% of the total long tons shipped to Russia.⁷⁷ The vast majority came overland via Vladivostok.⁷⁸ This means that the argument that aid to Russia influenced the decision to invade Persia in August 1941 can only have been based on an anticipated scenario. That scenario required that free passage

was available through Persia and that Russia had held off the Germans in the Caucasus. None of these factors could be assumed in August 1941.

I would argue that the historiography has identified factors for the decision to invade that are specific to the war, but which ignore the larger geopolitical realities that pre-date and are independent from the conflict. These factors, or “war drivers” – German threat, aid to Russia and oil – appear in all accounts in slightly different guises and with slightly different emphasis. Yet without the geopolitical context of the British Empire, I would argue that these factors are lacking and incomplete.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Persia's role in the long history of British geopolitical concerns in Central Asia was a direct function of the possession of the Raj. The invasion in 1941 became one of the last acts of Empire and contains echoes of more than a century of conflicts, feints and maneuvers by Britain as an Imperial power in Central Asia. In the analysis that follows I show that Persia's place in the chessboard of Britain's Imperial defence policies had a long and at times confusing history. This was often characterised by a waxing and waning of significance and interest, in counterpoint with its neighbour Afghanistan. What is clear, however, is that Persia was a well accepted component part of Imperial policy from the beginning of the nineteenth century, serving as and when required and in varying degrees as a buffer state, intermediary or bulwark between British India and its traditional foe in Central Asia, Russia. This was at its apogee in the early twentieth century, beginning with the 1907 partition by Russia and Britain (see Map 2 and Appendix C).

Overview

A survey of the place of Persia in British foreign and Imperial policy reveals a chronology devoid of any consistent pattern, in no small part due to competing policy objectives and the overlapping interests of a variety of stakeholders over a 150 year period. Despite this, a policy towards Persia (irrespective of form) was a key plank in the composition, formulation, execution and administration of Indian Imperial policy in Central Asia. The Persian expert Rose Louise Greaves summarises the position at the end of the nineteenth century:

Persia in the latter part of the nineteenth century had a significant place in British policy. The position she occupied between the rapidly expanding Russian Empire on one side and Great Britain's Indian Empire on the other gave her, like Afghanistan, her neighbour to the east, the political and strategic importance of a buffer state. She constituted a substantial outwork in Indian defence.⁷⁹

The *Cambridge History of Iran* offers up five component parts to British policy with respect to Persia in the nineteenth century:

1. The predominant place of India in the general formulation of British foreign policy.
2. The subordination of Britain's Indian policy to European considerations.
3. The importance of the defence of India as an issue in British party politics.
4. British policy in Persia followed the need for it in the context of India and Indian policy.
5. The challenge between a policy for Persia and a policy for Afghanistan and the repeated alternation between the two, which led to a policy of that was neither consistent nor strong.⁸⁰

In addition to the economic benefits derived from India, the Raj and its function was also an important part of the British Empire's conception of itself, and how it wished to be perceived by others. A 1901 War Office document, cited by Greaves, describes the importance placed on "prestige":

The loss of India by conquest would be a death-blow to our prosperity, prestige and power. The damaging effects of even a near approach by hostile forces would be incalculable ... Next in importance then, and second only to the security of the United Kingdom itself, comes the question of the defence of India.⁸¹

More recently, Denis Wright (British Ambassador to Tehran 1963-1971) in his history of the Qajar period (written just prior to the 1979 Islamic Revolution) comments: "Britain regarded her paramount interest in Persia to be the maintenance of that country's independence and territorial integrity as a safeguard for her Indian Empire".⁸² I would argue that these late nineteenth and early twentieth century Imperial policy perspectives were drawn upon by British decision-makers at the time of the invasion in 1941. The obvious reason for this is that geopolitical circumstances in 1941 were largely the same as they had been since the early nineteenth century. As I will show in this chapter, the Imperial context with the Raj as centerpiece was in important ways no different in 1941 than it had been in Sir John Malcolm's time, almost 150 years prior.

Beginnings and The Early Nineteenth Century

As early as the sixteenth century, some initial commercial and quasi-diplomatic interaction existed between Britain and Persia.⁸³ The first real beginnings of British concerns about Persia as a route to India arose during the Napoleonic Wars, from a French, rather than a Russian threat.⁸⁴ In 1800 Sir John Malcolm⁸⁵, a Dumfries born, Farsi speaking twenty year old who had joined the East India Company at thirteen⁸⁶, was sent to Tehran by the Indian Governor-General Lord Wellesley.⁸⁷ Malcolm, by all

accounts an extraordinary man⁸⁸, was to become one of the dominant figures of early nineteenth century British forays into Persia and Central Asia. Malcolm proceeded to negotiate the first commercial and political treaties between Britain and Persia, despite a waning of the concerns about France following Napoleon's naval defeat in Egypt by Nelson at the Battle of the Nile.

The embassy of Malcolm (extravagant and enormously generous to the Shah⁸⁹) is in retrospect the archetype of British contact with Persia up until the twentieth century. This archetype might be described as comprising the best of intentions and appearances but little in the way of substance. Malcolm's initial success and the resultant comity led to treaties which provided for a Persian attack on Afghanistan in the case of an invasion of India, and forestalled any French commercial or other activity on coastal or island regions in the Gulf.

While the first excursion by Malcolm was in response to Napoleon's ambitions towards India, from the beginning of the nineteenth century until Soviet times, the Russian bear was a perennial northern threat to Persia. Throughout the nineteenth century this expressed itself as a series of wars, territorial annexations and other agitations in Transcaucasia, the Khanates and the Persian borderlands.

The long First Russo-Persian War (1804-1813) commenced with a Russian attack on what is today Armenia (Echmiadzin, today known as Vagharshapat). The Qajar Shah Fath-Ali first sought help from a prevaricating Britain and then France. The supportive French missions in response resulted in the Franco-Persian Treaty of

Finkenstein, signed in 1807.⁹⁰ That treaty, among other things, contained provisions which required Persia to declare war on Britain, to expel British citizens and to give Napoleon passage across Persia if a decision to invade India was taken. As can be imagined, the tenor of Finkenstein set off the klaxons in London and Calcutta.

Lord Minto⁹¹, Governor-General of India from June 1807, squared up to the French threat with the view that: “we ought to meet the expected contest in Persia or the adjacent countries”.⁹² On the instruction of Lord Minto, a mission from India again led by Sir John Malcolm set out. Confusingly, Sir Harford Jones⁹³ was sent at the same time by London to Tehran on a near identical mission.⁹⁴ Wright explains this slightly comic affair as an example of the competition between London and Calcutta for control over the direction of British policy in Persia.⁹⁵ Malcolm himself commented on arrival at Muscat: “I expect while on the road to Teheran, to hear of Sir Harford’s confirmation ... and then my embarrassment will be complete”.⁹⁶ The Malcolm party arrived early in 1808 and was rebuffed by Fath-Ali Shah. In contrast, Sir Harford was welcomed in 1809 as the false efficacy of French power in Persia became apparent and the Russian threat grew.⁹⁷ Harford Jones thereafter concluded a treaty (known as the Preliminary Treaty of 1809) which repudiated all other treaties with European powers and in which Persia agreed to oppose any European force attempting to use her territory as a passage to India. Edward Ingram comments that: “the Board of Control had chosen, and the East India Company had accepted, Persia as the preferred barrier to overland invasion owing to her distance from the British territories in India”.⁹⁸

The tension between London and the Government of India with respect to the ownership of Persian issues continued during this period. In 1810, keen to reassert their influence in the face of the success of Harford Jones, Calcutta once again sent Malcolm to Tehran. The intention was to replace Harford Jones and reclaim the prestige and authority of the East India Company. This episode ultimately saw the return of Harford Jones to England, Malcolm to India and the appointment by the Foreign Office of Sir Gore Ouseley to Tehran.⁹⁹

Following Napoleon's invasion of Russia in June 1812 and the ongoing First Russo-Persian War, the aid provided by Britain was limited to diplomatic assistance in the peace negotiations with Russia, plus some minor involvement by British officers.¹⁰⁰ The Treaty of Gulistan in 1813, which brought an end to the war with Russia, began the long process of Russian accumulation of disputed Transcaucasian territories, with the secession of modern day Azerbaijan, Dagestan and Georgia, and the granting of exclusive rights to Russia in respect of the Caspian Sea and trade in Persia. This also coincided with Sir Gore Ouseley converting the Preliminary Treaty of 1809 into the Definitive Treaty of 1812 (subsequently subject to further revisions until 1814).¹⁰¹ A common theme that can be seen in both the French and the British overtures to Persia at this time was that the practical ability (and perhaps the genuine desire) to provide the type of help and assistance that was sought by Persia was, invariably, absent.

After the final defeat of the *Grande Armée*, Britain's enthusiasm for Persian adventures entered one of the regular waning phases that so characterised the

relationship throughout the nineteenth century. In 1826 the Second Russo-Persian War began and resulted in the defeat of Persia and the Treaty of Turkmanchay in 1828. This treaty gave Russia influence and control over northern Khanates in the region of what is now Azerbaijan and Armenia, and increased direct Russian influence on Persian internal affairs. Again, the involvement and engagement by the British in this conflict was piecemeal, with a limited number of British officers and some irregular forces fighting alongside the Persians. The large reparations bill levied by Russia was partially financed by Britain in return for her disentanglement from the provisions of the multi-version 1814 treaty.¹⁰²

The Mid-Nineteenth Century

The mid-1830s and 1840s saw the focus shift towards Afghanistan and the question of Herat, with the attempted but ultimately unsuccessful siege of that city in 1837 by the newly enthroned Qajar Mohammed Shah (and the participation by the British Orientalist and fabled Hero of Herat, Eldred Pottinger).¹⁰³ The Siege of Herat led to the complicated and ultimately disastrous First Anglo-Afghan War in 1839 and ultimately to the destruction of Elphinstone's Army in 1842.

The Qajar Nasir ed-Din Shah, who had ascended the Peacock Throne in 1848, launched a further attack against Herat in 1852, with similar consequences to those of his predecessor fifteen years prior.¹⁰⁴ The Herat question continued to impact Anglo-Persian relations during the mid 1800s, with the brief Anglo-Persian War in 1856-1857 prompted by the repeat occupation of Herat. After expelling the Persians from Herat, a British expeditionary force attacked Persia (again occupying Kharg

Island and moving inland towards Korramshar and Ahwaz at considerable cost to the Persian forces, see Map 1). Terms were soon agreed in the form of The Treaty of Paris – mild in form, however, the Shah was required to formally abandon any present or future claim by Persia over Herat.¹⁰⁵

The Indian Mutiny in 1857 and the subsequent transfer of the powers of the East India Company to the Crown led to a significant escalation in the anxiety that Britain felt about India. This led not only to a massive increase in the size of the standing British army in India, but also served to amplify defence of India concerns more broadly. The risk was now seen as not just direct invasion, but indirect agitation and civil disturbance caused by a foreign power standing at the gates to India. Whether these fears and anxieties were well placed was, however, another matter. As Firuz Kazemzadeh, writing on the period following the Mutiny, has commented: “An advance in the direction of India would alarm the English to whom even the vastest deserts, highest mountains and deepest seas did not seem sufficient to protect their dearest possession”.¹⁰⁶

The Late Nineteenth Century

From the 1860s British policy towards Persia was being driven by the rapacity of Russian encroachment on the Central Asian Khanates. Following the annexation of Samarkand in 1868 and Khiva in 1873, there were renewed efforts on the part of Persia to counter Russian advances via establishing greater links with Britain and Europe (including the famous Reuter Concession granted in 1872). These overtures included a first visit by a Shah (Nasir ed-Din) to Britain in 1873 (which was described

by Queen Victoria herself as “the great event of the day” and accordingly Nasir ed-Din added the Garter to his list of honours and awards).¹⁰⁷ In 1874 the Shah wrote asking for moral and material support from Britain to prevent Russia annexing Merv and the surrounding regions. This was not forthcoming. Subsequently the encounters between the Russians and the Turkmens culminated in the battles at Geok-Teppe in 1879 and 1881, and the annexation of Merv in 1884 (see Map 1).

For the remainder of the nineteenth century, the character of British policy with respect to Persia and its formulation in the world of Whitehall and party politics was the contest between the “forward school” and that of “masterly inactivity”.¹⁰⁸ Yet while the balance of the nineteenth century saw an increasing focus on Persia and Central Asia, the policy prevarication continued. Greaves has noted that the formulation of clear and defined positions was a task that seemed beyond accomplishment:

For more than a decade Lord Salisbury had tried to get facts assembled and ideas exchanged that would lead in the end to a rational and well-defined policy in Persia. He had asked the questions which needed answers. He had tried to jog the Government of India into taking as lively an interest in Persia as it did in Afghanistan ... Everyone agreed that the condition of Persia was critical, but the Government of India told the Foreign Office that the Persian question was an Imperial rather than an Indian matter so responsibility rested on the Foreign Office, and the Foreign Office replied that as Persia was predominately an Indian interest any action must come from the Government of India or the Indian Office.¹⁰⁹

The lack of clear policy with respect to Persia appears almost as *the de facto* policy as the nineteenth century drew to a close. Lord Curzon, who was both Viceroy (1899-1905) and later Foreign Secretary (1919-1924), commented soon after his appointment as Viceroy:

I cannot find anywhere in the records of our administration here [in Simla], and there certainly was not in the Foreign Office records at home, any attempt to lay down, as the basis of common action, what our interests in Persia are, or what they demand; nor have I ever come across any one who could tell me either what our policy towards Persia, or what it should be.¹¹⁰

The Twentieth Century

The period from the turn of the century until the Great War, Persia's fortunes were at a nadir. Gavin Hambly, writing in the Cambridge History of Iran, describes this period in bleak terms:

[Persia had] all but ceased to exist as an independent state. The Majlis was dismissed and did not meet again for three years. Ministries were of a makeshift kind and depend on the will of the two legations. The titular head of the country was the young Ahmad Shah, destined to be the last of the Qajars. A state of financial embarrassment prevailed ... central authority fell into disrepute in the provinces as the penniless government failed to maintain order.¹¹¹

The beginning of the twentieth century saw the British engaged in the Second Boer War and the Russians with the Russo-Japanese War of 1904, and their unexpected defeat. Jennifer Siegel, in her study of this period, comments: "In the wake of

domestic unrest and international discomfort unleashed by Japan's victory, Russia sought to achieve a critical reorientation of its imperial strategy ... Expansion in Central Asia, and the collision with Britain it would invariably engender, was not a reasonable gamble for a war and revolution-torn empire".¹¹²

The output of changing geopolitical and Great Power circumstances at the turn of the century was the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention (containing provisions in relation to Afghanistan and Tibet as well as Persia) which resulted in the formal partition of Persia into a Russian sphere, a British sphere and an independent sphere (see Map 2 for the territorial divisions).

For Britain and the architect of the Convention, Sir Edward Grey, the 1907 agreement represented the culmination of efforts to come to some negotiated settlement with Russia in Central Asia, and the beginnings of what would later be the Triple Entente. Again, the policy underpinnings of the 1907 agreement betray the uncertainty that seems to lie at the heart of all the conflicted inter-British dealings with Persia. Greaves writes of the negotiations with Russia: "The British had opened the Persian part of the negotiations in September 1906. In the early stages of negotiations the Foreign Office had not decided what the essential British interests in Persia were".¹¹³ The 1907 treaty was widely criticized in London and India, and its intention to act as a counterweight to and in the interests of the European balance of power. Greaves cites a speech by Lord Curzon at the time:

I have been reluctantly driven to the conclusion that, whatever may be the ultimate effects produced, we have thrown away to a large extent the efforts of our diplomacy and of our trade for more than a century; and I do not feel at all sure that this treaty, in its Persian aspect, will conduce either to the security of India, to the independence of Persia, or to the peace of Asia.¹¹⁴

The Great War

Although Persia declared neutrality during the Great War, there were a series of military operations by both Britain and Russia in Persia against the Ottoman Empire. Turkish troops entered Persia in November 1914 in order to frustrate any attempt by Russia to invade Turkey. The Ottoman forces occupied Tabriz in January 1915. The actions of the British at this time bear remarkable similarities to 1941, with troops being dispatched from India to the head of the Persian Gulf to protect British strategic interests. Wright's overview of these events illustrates clearly the parallels with 1941:

a small force sailed from India and in November 1914, after landing a party to protect the Abadan refinery, captured Fao and Basra from the Turks. In late January 1915, after Turkish troops and Arab tribesman from Mesopotamia had invaded Khuzistan and a prelude to marching on Ahwaz and the oilfields, an Indian battalion together with thirty men of the Dorsetshire Regiment sailed by the Karun from Basra ... Despite these moves, Arabs in Turkish pay succeeded in cutting the oil pipe in a number of places and putting it out of action for over three months. The Turks advanced to within twenty-four miles of Ahwaz. British-Indian troops, now over 12,000 strong, went into action in March and May 1915. They drove the Turks and

their Arab allies out of Khuzistan: for the remainder of the war Khuzistan, with its oilfields and refinery, remained trouble free, thanks to the presence there of British troops.¹¹⁵

The Russian Revolution in March 1917 resulted in the withdrawal of Russian troops from north Persia, creating a void which was exacerbated by the release by the Bolsheviks of the secret text of the assurances between the Triple Entente known as the Constantinople Agreement. Among other things, those assurances provided for the significant expansion of the British sphere of influence in Persia so that the entire neutral zone based on the 1907 division was to come under British control (see Map 2, the neutral zone is the area between the northern Russian sphere and the southern British sphere).¹¹⁶ The final coda to the Great War in Persia was a threat to the Caucasus and Caspian Sea oil assets from both Turkey and the Germans in late 1917. A mixed brigade of mostly British forces under the command of Major-General Lionel Charles Dunsterville was sent from Baghdad to Baku and Tiflis. This force, known as Dunsterforce, was engaged in the Battle of Baku in June 1918. These troops, later renamed Noperforce, remained in Persia at Qazvin until 1921.

The Interwar Period

The interwar period marked a significant change in the international, and Persian, situation. On the part of the British, the postwar peace treaties gave Britain both direct and expanded responsibilities in the Middle East, described by Basil Liddell Hart as: “the greatest example of strategical overextension known to history”.¹¹⁷ In the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution, the new Soviet response to Persia was

proclaimed via an open letter from Lenin and Stalin: “the treaty for the partition of Persia has been torn up and destroyed ... troops will be evacuated from Persia and the Persians will be ensured the right to freely determine their own destiny”.¹¹⁸

However, as Martin Sicker has observed, the reality of matters soon became apparent:

as the new Soviet Union’s Marxist-Leninist political program became anathema to the Western powers, Russia found itself increasingly geopolitically and geostrategically isolated. It was not long before the old tsarist dream of access to the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean through the Middle East became the reality of Soviet strategic policy.¹¹⁹

The 1919 Paris Peace Conference (to which Persia sent a delegation seeking international aid, despite having been a non-combatant, and was rebuked) coincided with overtures by the British to the new Persian Prime Minister Vosuq al-Dalweh for an exclusive Anglo-Persian agreement. This was championed by Lord Curzon and reflected his deeply held views about the place of India in the Imperial schematic, and the client state role that Persia could play in her defence: “You ask, why should England do this? Why should Great Britain push herself out in these directions? Of course the answer is obvious – India”.¹²⁰ The provisional agreement was signed on 9 August 1919 and while affirming Persian independence and integrity, it envisaged the appointment of a British financial adviser to the treasury and training and assistance to a unified Persian military. The Anglo-Persian agreement, never ratified

by the Majlis, was domestically and internationally condemned. It never recovered ground and was annulled in February 1921.¹²¹ Wright comments that:

Curzon could hardly have chosen a more unfavourable moment in which to launch a cherished scheme for the regeneration of Persia under British tutelage ... The Agreement soon came under fire not only in Persia but also in France, America and Russia, where the secrecy with which it had been negotiated and the dominant position it gave the British were much criticized. For the Persians it meant a further tightening of the British stranglehold: in their eyes foreign tutelage and national independence were incompatible ... [Curzon had] underrated the post-war mood of nationalism abroad in Persia and the strength of anti-British feeling.¹²²

In Persia, the interwar period saw the rise of Reza Khan following the 1921 coup (from April 1926 as Shah)¹²³ and marked a distinct departure from 1907-1917. A deliberately more independent Persia developed with significant modernisation, industrialisation and determined efforts by Reza Shah to distance his country from its historical bedfellows Britain and Russia.¹²⁴ It was the desire for an alternative that to some degree led Reza Shah towards Germany.

It has been suggested that the Soviet Union was too busy with internal matters for much of the interwar period to focus on imperial expansion. The balance of British policy thinking at the time viewed the Russian threat to India, when considered in the light of other multiple challenges facing the Empire (military, strategic and economic), as diminished.¹²⁵ Despite this, there was a process of Soviet-ization of

the Transcaucasian republics in the 1920s as well as similar, ultimately unsuccessful efforts, in the northern Persian territory of Gilan.¹²⁶

However, as the late Middle East specialist George Lenczowski has commented, these changes vis-à-vis Russia attitudes were temporary, not permanent. The ideological underpinnings of the Soviet Marxist-Leninist experiment drove the analysis: “The causes of Anglo-Soviet hostility had not been removed and could not be as long as Great Britain was an empire-owning country and the Soviet leaders believed in Marxism”.¹²⁷ In the surprisingly direct words of one Soviet thinker, Konstantin Troyanovsky:

India is our principal objective. Persia is the only path open to India. The Persian revolution is the key to the revolution of all of the Orient, just as Egypt and the Suez Canal are the key to the British domination of the Orient ... For the success of the oriental revolution Persia is the first nation that must be conquered by the Soviets ... Persia must be ours; Persia must belong to the revolution.¹²⁸

The Second World War

The opening years of the war present a complex picture in terms of Anglo-Soviet and Nazi-Soviet interactions as they relate to the later invasion of Persia. The period from the partition of Poland under the terms of the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact in 1939 was characterised by uncertainty on all sides as to the future passage of the war, with Britain’s primary concern in 1940 being the defence of the British Isles from invasion. As discussed above, Persia’s declared independence in the war was

diluted by the embrace of Germany by Reza Shah. There were British war plans in 1940 for the protection of Anglo-Persian assets in the event of a Soviet invasion, including the bombing of the Baku oil fields.¹²⁹ On the Soviet side, war games were conducted by the Transcaucasus Military District along the Persian border as late as May 1941.¹³⁰ Indeed, the short lived Russian and Nazi entente formally contemplated a Russian sphere of influence, via the terms of the draft German four powers agreement of 1940-41:

south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf is recognized as the centre of aspirations of the Soviet Union.¹³¹

All of this, of course, changed dramatically in the early hours of 22 June 1941, as Hitler launched the largest land invasion in history. The survey above clearly shows that, in 1941, British decision-makers had available a long history of Persian policy precedent to apply when India was threatened. As the *Cambridge History of Iran* suggests: “British policy in Persia followed the need for it in the context of India and Indian policy”.¹³² I would argue that direct comparisons can be drawn between the geopolitical situation in the late summer of 1941 and much of the nineteenth century *as it related to Persia and the defence of India*. This is of course not to suggest that the nineteenth century contains within it examples of the Second World War; rather that from a macro perspective, Persia serving as a barrier to India for the British was activated both by the onset of the war in general, and in particular with the launch of Operation Barbarossa. All of the significant components that brought about an Imperial policy towards Persia (in its waxing not waning form) during the

nineteenth century were extant in 1941. These include a heightened threat level in the region, potential instability in India due to the attitude of the nationalists to the war (including some spot mutinies within the Indian regiments of the Army), an aggressive power with potential designs on India and gaming by the same set of European great powers. The emerging reality of air power and long range bombing also became a factor in concerns about German threat to India from bases in Persia, exacerbating the traditional fears of indirect and remote threats to stability and civil order. Generally, more than a century of Persian Imperial policy provided a policy and intellectual framework for the invasion in 1941. Specifically, the 1907 partition of the country offered a blueprint for how the invasion could be, and was, undertaken.

CHAPTER 3: STRATEGIC AND MILITARY PERSPECTIVES

In this chapter I examine primary UK archival materials ranging from mid to late 1941 that relate to the invasion of Persia. These materials are a combination of public and private correspondence from decision-makers at the time, as well as a range of official government papers. There is a particular focus on Churchill in part due to the volume of materials available. As the previous chapter showed, Imperial policy towards Persia was far from static, fixed or generally agreed. I would argue that this feature is entirely reflected in the way in which Britain's decision-makers responded to Operation Barbarossa. That response was pragmatic but generally poorly articulated. Persia as a landmass was intended to forestall any threat to India by acting as a defensive space. There was no relevance for Persia as a nation as opposed to a geography in this analysis.

As early as April 1941, Churchill, in a telegram to then Secretary of State for India Leopold Amery, commented about the "undoubted Eastern trend of the war"¹³³. Again in early correspondence with Sir John Dill (then still CIGS) in relation to the proposal to replace General Wavell with General Auchinleck as Commander-in-Chief India, he comments: "India has a great and growing part to play in this war, and the war is moving in her direction".¹³⁴ In a letter to General Auchinleck in August, just prior to the invasion, Churchill offers some more detailed and private insight into his thinking about the region and the defence of India. It is worth noting that this letter was part of the archival materials of Sir John Dill and has not as far as I am aware been referenced elsewhere (including not in *The Second World War*):

You are no doubt appraised of the remarkable strength of the Russian naval force in the Caspian Sea, and of the reports that we have had that they are gathering a very large reserve army behind the Volga. Our endeavor [in the Middle East] must be to give them a good through railway route to the warm water of the Persian Gulf, along which United States supplies can flow in an ever-broadening stream during 1942 and 1943. The great half-circle from the mouth of the Volga to the Western Desert with Turkey as a dull, stubborn bastion in its centre, should prove a barrier to the Nazi conquest dreams in the East. *It is the shield of India*, for which her troops may rightly be used to keep war far from the Indian peoples and their homes (my italics).¹³⁵

It is likely that Churchill's advance notice of potential Nazi activity in the East was derived from his access to ULTRA decrypts. The extract above offers the clearest articulation that I have found regarding the precise placing of the defence of India concerns within the decision-making framework at the highest level. The diary entries and telegrams of Leopold Amery, who was Secretary of State for India in 1941, contain a number of useful passages. The telegrams, primarily in correspondence with Viceroy Linlithgow¹³⁶ are also valuable in offering the India Office perspective on the defence of India and the place of Persia. Amery kept a meticulous diary with extensive entries covering the mundane to close observation of events and individuals. Just a handful of days after the launch of Barbarossa, Amery wrote:

To guess as the future course of things is of course very rash but I am very much disposed to think that the Germans, on having failed to make a German leg of the Eastern Mediterranean by getting to Suez and getting hold of Syria and Iraq, are now going to concentrate on control of the Black Sea and of Transcaucasia, so as to be able not only to exploit and expedite Baku oil, but also to threaten Iraq and India from Iran.¹³⁷

Amery also refers to the complications and contradictions inherent in the British Imperial policy towards Persia that was discussed above:

Back to the Office for a couple of hours. Owing to the Debate I had to miss a session with Winston and Auchinleck on Iraq and Iran but gather from Muspratt that Winston had very wisely sat on the somewhat half baked schemes of the Chiefs of Staff for the invasion of Iran and that on the other hand he shared Wavell's view that Iraq and Iran should be defended as far forward as possible.¹³⁸

After the easy success of Operation Countenance, Amery wrote to the Viceroy: "You must be pleased with the success of our Persian campaign. We ought to be able to hold the half-circle from the Volga to the Nile and thus make a sure defence which will keep war far from the Indian peoples under our care".¹³⁹

Awareness within the India Office and India of the policy legacy vis-à-vis Persia is detailed and accurate. In a telegram prior to Barbarossa from the Viceroy to Amery:

particularly in Iran, where the German threat is very great and interposes dangers between our forces in Iraq and India. Distrust between the Foreign Office and India over Iran has been historical going back to Malcolm's time.¹⁴⁰

These views also appear in official War Cabinet papers and policy documents. A War Cabinet Joint Planning Staff aide memoire dated 23 July and entitled *The Strategic Necessity for Holding our Present Middle East Position* comments:

We must also cover India. If we do not, and the rot spreads in the Arab world, India will be a liability instead of an asset ... Defence in depth is necessary. It is not enough to hold the outer ring, even if we could do so ... the holding of our present position will give us a base from which to join hands with Russia in Iran ... if we withdraw to an outer ring, not only would our whole position be greatly worsened but we should suffer ... Considerable economic loss, even if we held the Iranian oil fields. This would be disastrous if Abadan were lost or the refinery were destroyed. Germany would gain in proportion to our loss and would have free run over the whole of the Mediterranean, North Africa and Asia as far as India, without having had to fight for it. She must be made to fight for every inch.¹⁴¹

One of the key perspectives of the threat to India via Persia and the Caucasus was the use of aerodromes by the Luftwaffe as forward bases from which to attack. This concern can be seen throughout the archival materials, no doubt influenced by the effect of long range air power during the Battle of Britain and the Blitz. Within ten days of the launch of Barbarossa, assessments were being prepared by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee, estimating: "the scale of Axis attack which might be

brought to bear against a defensive position established by us on the approximate line Kermanshah-Kirkuk between the time of the end of resistance in the Ukraine, the Caucasus and the Black Sea and the Spring of 1941".¹⁴² This assessment, in the wake of the rapid initial German advances, contemplates a scenario where German air forces are able to operate from airfields in northern Persia – “Germany might, under the most favourable conditions, be in a position to operate from aerodromes in Northern Iran a mixed force of some 200 long range bombers and fighters”¹⁴³ – this is the threat from a distance to India that had been feared since the Mutiny, in a new guise.

It is certainly the case that much of the official correspondence at this time is oblique in its references to the defence of India. I would argue that this in part stems from the disinclination on the part of the British to pessimism during wartime. The manifest contempt that Churchill held for any negative or defeatist talk was well known¹⁴⁴. In his voluminous correspondence, writing at the end of August to General Ismay, Churchill comments about the state of play, two months after the commencement of Operation Barbarossa. His typical disdain for negativity (*my italics*) is evident:

I do not believe that the Germans will reach the Caucasus during the next three weeks. But the Caucasus is a very large place, *and if we are going to look upon the worst side of things* it is better to be precise. Where, exactly, are their troops expected to be, and in what numbers, by the latter half of September! What aerodromes will they work from, and is the Batum-Baku railway assumed to be in

working order? Is it reasonable to suppose that Tiflis will fall by the end of September?¹⁴⁵ (my italics)

In fairness to Churchill, it was perhaps the only available course to take, given the dire circumstances in 1940-1941. As John Keegan has commented:

There were no military orthodoxies that applied, however, to Britain's predicament after June 1940, indeed until well after the United States had entered the war. On paper, in retrospect, Britain was doomed to defeat ... Churchill perceived that military orthodoxy offered no way out ... instead, 'his pugnacious spirit demanded constant action. The enemy must be assailed continuously: the Germans must be made to bleed and burn'. This was boldness incarnate. Britain's strategic predicament in June 1940 was not only extreme, but unprecedented in its extremity.¹⁴⁶

It can also be speculated that a cautious and careful Whitehall mandarin would be wise to the readership of any memoranda and this would have informed the preparation and drafting of official documents. The more open, candid language and descriptions that can be seen in Leopold Amery's diary entries are perhaps a clearer illustration of the thinking at the time. There is another factor which accounts for the treatment of the defence of India as an unspoken assumption in the considerations undertaken by policy-makers. That factor is a direct function of the treatment of the existence of the Empire and thereafter the Raj, as an assumed state of affairs. As L J Butler has commented:

It seems indisputable that until the Second World War, and arguably beyond it, the British Empire was to a great extent taken for granted by successful British governments, regarded as a 'natural' feature of Britain's complex of overseas relationships. Its affairs had to be managed with care, employing a variety of means, and the entire structure required an ingenious approach to problems of defence. Yet for the generation of policy makers active during this period, the importance of the Imperial system was unquestioned, offering as it seems to do both a measure and major source of Britain's international prestige and economic stature.¹⁴⁷

Despite these comments, it does not require a strained interpretation of language for the meaning to become apparent. The War Cabinet Joint Planning Staff when discussing the proposed action in Persia wrote:

The expulsion of the German colony has been taken as our immediate aim in Iran, but we suggest that our real military requirements are: - (a) To ensure the defence of the oilfields and refineries against air attack and against sabotage. This will necessitate the introduction of British Forces. (b) To obtain such measure of control over the government of Iran (Persia) as will prevent them from embarking on *a policy hostile to our interests.*¹⁴⁸ (my italics)

In early July the JIC's comments about the possible extent of German advance and success are revealing. The geography discussed below (see Map 1) envisages the Germans in place to the south-east of the Caspian Sea, north of Khorasan in what is

present day Turkmenistan. This is indeed well east of the so-called AA-line that marked the intended geostrategic goal of Barbarossa (see Map 3):

Germany will be unable to develop her maximum effort in the Kirkuk-Kermanshah area unless Russia has been driven out of the Caucasus area and is no longer a military factor there. Unless Russia has collapsed completely Germany will also require some control of the territory to the *East of the Caspian Sea, South of Krasnovodsk in order to protect her Eastern flank and secure the routes South through Iran (Persia)*. Similarly Germany must have obtained a defensive line against any Russian interference from the North, *if she is to feel secure in any advance South through Iran.*¹⁴⁹ (my italics)

In memoranda in relation to the use of Persia as a supply corridor to Russia, the Chiefs of Staff observed that: “it was agreed that the increased danger to India of the proposed development of the East-Persian lorry route would not be severe, but that any fuller development would raise strategic questions which would require further consideration.”¹⁵⁰ The traditional “forward school” and the articulation of Persia as a defensive theatre was the clear underpinning of the decision to invade (the clipped language in the telegram extracts below was in the interests of brevity):

Should German progress in South Russia meet from now on with little organized resistance, we consider the Germans might reach Caucasus by mid-September, otherwise one month after Russian collapse. After organising defences of oilfields, including air-striking force to neutralise our air offensive, she might attempt to deny

us Northern Iraq aerodromes by land attack, or develop large-scale attack on whole position at head of Persian Gulf.¹⁵¹

Elsewhere, in a memo from the JIC sub-committee concerned with the nature and scale of an attack in Persia:

Bushire flanks sea route and forms ideal potential base for operation dive bombers against shipping and against refinery Bahrein also threatens Basra Abadan and Shatt. If in our hands constitutes valuable base for interception enemy attacks from air bases south of Tehran against shipping and Bahrein also for our air counter offensive against German penetration south and east ... Conclusion therefore most satisfactory defence is one conducted from Persian Coast with main bases Bushire Bandar Abbas which should be occupied as precautionary measure before Germans penetrate into Iran.¹⁵²

There is obvious and understandable uncertainty in terms of the various possible strategic intentions of the Germans in the southern flanks of the Barbarossa front. What is clear from these official sources is that there was a clear awareness of the potential risk to India, via Persia, from German successes in the east

CHAPTER 4: INDIAN MILITARY PERSPECTIVES

In this chapter I review the official Indian military history of the Second World War. There are very few other readily available secondary source materials that consider the activities of the Indian Army in the western regions of India during the war. A review of any archival materials in India or Pakistan is beyond the scope of this thesis. This situation is made more complex by the fact that the territory in question (Baluchestan and Sind) is now part of Pakistan (and indeed the official history was a joint undertaking by India and Pakistan). Despite this, the official history provides clear and specific evidence of defensive measures taken in India in response to Barbarossa and the risk of an invasion via Persia.

The Structure of the Indian Army

It is worth noting the organizational structure of the Indian Army in the late 1930s and its related to defence in the west of the country. Forces for these purposes were titled "Frontier Defence", and comprised eleven infantry brigades and five artillery regiments (plus a reserve of four infantry brigades, one cavalry brigade and three artillery regiments) who were dispersed along the North West Frontier from the Hindu Kush to Baluchestan (see Map 1). In addition, there were three infantry brigade groups not formally connected to the defence of India in the north-west, to be dispatched as necessary for, among other things, the protection of the Anglo-Iranian oil fields.¹⁵³

The general alignment of these forces was to the north-west, consistent with the threat perception at the time (and the long term policy of Britain identified above)

that focused on Afghanistan, rather than Persia. In reviewing the period following the launch of Operation Barbarossa, the *Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War* makes clear reference to the threat that emerged:

The Chiefs of Staff feared that German progress in the Caucasus would be rapid and that within two months they would 'gain possession of the oil bearing area in that region'. In that event there was a probability of Afghanistan and Iran turning hostile to the British, and then in these lands the 'German forces could move far and fast'. Hence the Chiefs of Staff desired that all measures should be adopted which would prevent easy German passage through these countries and which would 'reduce to the effective minimum' their hostility. Germans, therefore, had to be expelled from the two countries. The growing fear of speedy collapse of Soviet Russia and the direction of German thrust against the Caucasus, raised fears of a threat to Iraq, Iran and the cis-Caspian regions.¹⁵⁴

The official history makes specific reference to the idea of Persia as a staging ground for an invasion of India:

... a hostile power dominating Iran or having access to the Caspian region would be in a position to mount a full scale invasion, comprising land and air forces, in that region. The soil was suitable for armoured action and the area could yield to the easy construction of air fields ... The Nazi advance in the Black Sea-Caspian region towards the Volga, exposing the Georgian defences, posed a new threat of invasion along the south-eastern Caspian shore, through eastern Iran to the western frontier of India.¹⁵⁵

The official history sets out the particular concerns and likely geographical focus for any German advance. It is interesting to note that there is no reference to any resistance from Persia, or indeed Persia as a sovereign and independent country:

- a) That the Germans would establish air forces to threaten British sea communications in the Persian Gulf.
- b) That they would establish their air-forces further east and thereby threaten bases in north-west India, the port of Karachi and the shipping in the Arabian Sea.
- c) That in conjunction with b) above, they would endeavor to occupy Baluchestan as a defence base for further operations.
- d) That in combination with the air attacks and the occupation of Baluchestan the Germans would attempt to involve the British with the Afghans and foment tribal discontent

This implied that the German attack would include the utilization of both air forces as well as land forces, both armoured and otherwise. For the air offensive, the number of aerodromes in eastern Persia, Baluchestan or in the Kandahar-Farah region offered facilities to the Germans for heavy air attacks against Karachi and Quetta as well as against important bases in the frontier regions. While there were good aerodromes at Kandahar, Farah and Zahidan, there could be developed landing grounds almost anywhere in this region¹⁵⁶

With the launch of Barbarossa, a new defensive plan, the Defence of India Plan of 1941, was produced. This revised defensive plan was presented to London and

adopted by the Government of India, and identified the western extremities of Baluchestan and the Sind as the focus (referred to as the Western (Independent) District).¹⁵⁷ As a result of the adoption of this new plan, specific military defensive measures were put in place by the Indian Army in the Western (Independent) District. In June 1941, the Headquarters of the new Western (Independent) District were instructed by the General Staff that formal defences were to be built the Baluchestan-Sind area south of Fort Sandeman (modern day Zhob, which can be seen on Map 1, south of Peshawar). This included the construction of significant defensive works (often large concrete blocks) on the main approaches to Baluchestan which were to be “prepared in depth so as to localize a breakthrough and to enable the situation to be stabilised for a counterattack”.¹⁵⁸ The new threat from the rise of long range air power is also clearly articulated, and reflects similar concerns that have been identified in the archival materials surveyed in Chapter 2.

What is clear from the official Indian history is that, for the Indian Army, there was no shortage of focus, examination and analysis of the risks of an invasion of India via Persia in 1941. By mid-September 1941, the north/south invasion of Persia by the British and Soviets was complete. Thereafter, political machinations led to Reza Shah being replaced as Shah by his son Mohammed Reza on 16 September. Mohammed Reza was only 21 at the time and was to be the last King of Kings. No one could have imagined the events of 1979, almost four decades in the future. Far to the north, across the broad front of Barbarossa, the First Battle of Kiev and the Siege of Leningrad raged. The early anxieties of the German commanders continued to foment in the face of Russian opposition. By December, the events at Pearl

Harbour and the failure of the German Army to capture Moscow marked a new phase, and in a contemporary historical sense marked the true globalization of the Second World War. This rendered the Persian affair secondary in many respects, not least in its defensive Imperial intent.

CHAPTER 5: PUBLIC AND MASS MEDIA PERSPECTIVES

In previous chapters I have shown that, in 1941, there was within British Imperial policy a clear and identifiable policy continuum within which Persia was a component part of defence of India concerns. In addition, the archival material demonstrates that within the political, strategic and military worldview of the British decision-makers there was a recognition and understanding that the decision to invade Persia included within it a provision for the potential defence of India. There is also practical evidence of Indian military activities in the Baluchestan-Sind region to prepare for an invasion.

It is important for my conclusions to also consider the extent to which these “conceptions” of the defence of India can be found within a wider frame, in what might be described as a collective understanding of the geopolitics. I have therefore reviewed the mass media from the time, including materials from both within Britain, India and elsewhere. In doing so, it is plain that there was a widespread, well understood and consistent strategic message across the political spectrum as well as outside the Empire. That message is explicit in its focus on the defence of India.

Both the nature of the regulation of British newspapers during the war and their approach to content supports a conclusion that the mass media coverage was not skewed by government interference, propaganda or censorship. Although the Home Secretary was granted strong and loosely-defined powers in 1940 to ban any news publication without right of appeal that published material not “supportive” of the

war effort (known as Regulation 2D),¹⁵⁹ the press in the UK operated with few impediments. Stephen Koss comments that: “Churchill’s idea was to leave newspapers free to get on with their business while they left him free to get on with his”.¹⁶⁰ Indeed, polar opposites in the form of George Orwell and Max Aitken, Lord Beaverbrook, could agree that, within the press, there was a general movement of opinion to the Left during the war.¹⁶¹

The Times of London, as early as 7 August, devoted significant space to an analysis of the “War Roads to India: The Contingencies of the Russian Campaign: A New Strategical Position”. While self-evidently journalistic in style, the language used clearly reflects the fears and anxieties that typified British policy in this regard. The style and flavor of all of the coverage of the invasion by *The Times* during the months of August, September and October is entirely consistent with this passage.

The defeat of Russia would bring the Nazis to the gates of India ... New defensive positions would have to be sought for the protection of India and the East, and the neutrality of Iran and Afghanistan would be involved ... The direct threat to India lies mainly through Iran which is already the main centre of German intrigues in the Middle East ... The Nazis have already shown their hand in Iraq, and Iran is honeycombed with their agents. British action in Iraq has temporarily countered the direct menace, but the road to India through Afghanistan and Iran will lie open in the event of a Russian defeat ... The wide, open spaces of the Iranian plateau lend themselves to the easy movement of modern armies; an advance of extensive German forces by this route would constitute a double threat to the security of India.¹⁶²

The Manchester Guardian (as it was then known) spoke with a strikingly similar voice shortly after the start of Operation Countenance:

British and Russian troops yesterday invaded Iran, an independent, 'friendly' State. It is unpleasant for us as well as for Iran, but action had to be taken. President Roosevelt, although Iran was not in his mind, accurately described our position and our thoughts on 27 May: 'We know enough by now to know that it would be suicide to wait until the dictators are in our front yard. Anyone with an atlas and a reasonable knowledge of the sudden striking force of modern war knows that it is stupid to wait until a probable enemy has gained a foothold from which to attack. Old fashioned common sense calls for the use of a strategy which will prevent such an enemy from gaining a foothold in the first place'. Iran may not be our 'front yard' in the Middle East, but it is the back yard through which the Germans intend, if they can, to attack India.¹⁶³

The *Manchester Guardian* on 1 October 1941, "Iran and the Road to India" further remarks: "Quite aside from the enormous importance of its oil resources, Iran has been in the news before as the land approach from Europe to India". The article then proceeds to discuss the 1907 Convention and concludes that: "It is as well for us to realise not only that Iran gives us a road for war supplies to Russia but that British and Russian troops now stand together in Iran in defence of *the road to India*".¹⁶⁴ (my italics).

As early as July 1941, *The Economist* refers to the re-assignment of General Wavell to India as: “he is needed to organize India’s defences against Hitler”.¹⁶⁵ In late September 1941, *The Economist* editorializes that the gates of India have now been “locked”¹⁶⁶ and in October, contemplating anticipated Nazi efforts to reach Baku and Batum in the Spring of 1942, that the British must continue to guard the “road to India”.¹⁶⁷

The references to the defence of India are understandably replete in the *The Times of India* coverage of the invasion. On 19 July the seriousness of the situation in Persia was noted: “Iran borders India, and as a glance at the map shows, is in bombing range of centres like Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi. If the Germans seized landing grounds in Iran ... then India might well find herself in the front line of battle. This is no fantastic flight of fancy, but a grave possibility.”¹⁶⁸

On 26 August, in an article entitled: “Hitler’s Grand Strategy: Ultimate Drive to India”, *The Times of India* wrote: “Hitler’s strategy in the East is no secret, involving, as it does, a drive through the Caucasus to Iran through Afghanistan and then on to India”.¹⁶⁹ On the same day *The Times of India* described Operation Countenance as: “... solely to deny the Axis any further opportunity to threaten the security of Russia, the countries of the Middle East and India, and to prevent the oil and other resources of Iran from falling into Nazi hands”. It goes on to characterize Barbarossa as: “a dagger pointed at the very throat of India”.¹⁷⁰

On 10 September *The Times of India* includes a lengthy transcript of what is described as a “review” by Churchill of the state of play. The reference to the defence of India bears resemblance to the reference made in the telegram to General Auchinleck in August (cited above, page 41). It contains all of the themes that Churchill uses in *The Grand Alliance*:

The occupation of Persia enables us to *join hands* with the southern flank of the Russian army and to bring into action there both military and air forces. It also serves important British objects in presenting *a shield which should bar the eastward advance of the German invader*. In this, the armies of India, whose military quality becomes shinningly apparent, will play an increasing part and in doing so will keep the scourge of war a thousand miles or more from the homes of the peoples of India.¹⁷¹ (my italics)

I have also reviewed the *New York Times* in order to examine the extent to which the defence of India was part of a wide conception of the geopolitical realities at the time. The *New York Times* was able to reach similar conclusions about the decision on the part of Britain to invade Persia. Throughout the months of August and September a selection of the news items shows how commonplace the defence of India concerns were:

20 June 1941: German divisions still have a long way to go before they reach Russia’s Batum oil fields. But they will certainly attempt to get there. If they can cross the Caucasus Mountains they will arrive at the back door of India, with nothing to bar their way but the Persian plateau.¹⁷²

17 August 1941: There is a hardly a doubt that if the Nazis are successful there [in Russia], it is their intention to push eastwards to the coveted oil fields of Iraq and Iran, and then on through Afghanistan to India.¹⁷³

25 August 1941: Here [in Persia] the road to India crosses the road to Russia. Napoleon dreamed of using the Shah as an instrument for the invasion of India ... At any rate, it has long been apparent that one of the great strategic battles of this war would be fought in the Middle East ... Not only is it [Persia] the point of contact for British and Soviet forces; it is also one of the great ramparts of India.¹⁷⁴

26 August 1941: Iran was the gap in a territorial rampart that extended from Egypt to India. With the Anglo-Russian occupation of Iran, the British 'front' now extends unbroken from Libya to Baluchestan and the western frontiers of India ... The invasion, therefore, is of greater potential significance to the British strategical position than the Russian.¹⁷⁵

26 August 1941: This [Persia] is the one place where they could defend the Baku oil fields on one hand and the road to India on the other.¹⁷⁶

17 September 1941: The sudden abdication today of Riza Shah Pahlevi of Iran and his flight from Tehran before the advancing Anglo-Russian forces concludes the first major phase of the Allies' struggle to safeguard the Indian frontier.¹⁷⁷

Similarly, the *Washington Post* refers to Persia as a "stepping stone" to the "wealth of India"¹⁷⁸ and the following day, 27 August, the *Post* considers the reasoning

behind the occupation of Iran: “of equal importance, it creates a barrier in the way of a German drive to the Persian Gulf and India, a barrier likely to prove of tremendous value should Hitler’s armies succeed in taking over all of the Ukraine and the Caucasus”.¹⁷⁹

The value of this newspaper/mass media coverage lies in its real-time nature. We are offered additional insight into the thinking at the time in a way uncluttered and unaffected by long reflection and later events. I would argue that the most remarkable feature of the mass media coverage reviewed is the clarity of the references to the defence of India. The story of the invasion risk to India told by the mass media extracts is the most explicit and direct of all the materials surveyed. It is not confined to the right or the left, to particular journalistic categories or the yellow press, or to Britain or the Empire. The suggestion here is not that the mass media provides a more accurate or indeed a correct analysis in terms of the military and strategic issues raised by the invasion. Nor can the focus on the unfolding drama in the Middle East after the launch of Barbarossa in order to sell its product to its readership be disregarded. However, the mass media perspective cannot be ignored as it is reasonable to say that there is a reflective as well as a directive character to all such media coverage. Then, as now, there are regular and well established lines of dialogue and information (more so in the time of war and propaganda) between the media class and the political class. It would be naïve to suggest an absence of awareness on the part of the likes of Churchill (a devourer of newspapers) as to the matters of concern to the press.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding chapters, I have considered whether there is evidence in primary and secondary materials that points to the defence of India as a component of the British decision to invade Persia in 1941. The genesis for this question is the absence of the defence of India from most accounts of the invasion, as my literature review has shown. From a political and strategic policy perspective, I have identified a long and multifaceted history of British politico-military policy interests in Persia that were a direct function of Indian defence. While this policy was often haphazard, driven by *realpolitik* and external circumstances at a given time, from the beginning of the nineteenth century there is a clearly identifiable and acknowledged role for Persia as, in Churchill's words, a shield for India. From the time of the Mutiny and the transfer of powers to the Crown, this policy was amplified by a diffuse sense of anxiety about the stability of British rule, internal unrest and, in the twentieth century, emerging nationalist sentiment. These elements were all extant and active in the late Summer of 1941.

My examination of British archival materials from 1941 illustrates that there was an appreciation and a genuine consideration of the issue of Indian defence once Operation Barbarossa had been launched in June of that year. In addition, the telegrams, other correspondence and personal writings of Churchill and his coterie of decision-makers show that there was an explicit understanding and recognition of defence of India concerns associated with Barbarossa. Secretary of State for India Leo Amery's thoughtful and considered diary entries offer the clearest articulation of

this. All of these materials support the conclusion that the defence of India was important to the decision to invade. Moreover, none of them suggest otherwise.

My review of the official Indian military history from the war shows unequivocally that the defence of India was top of mind in Delhi in 1941. There were concrete military plans and actions undertaken on the western extremities of India to counter the potential threat from Germany via Persia, including the construction of defensive fortifications. Furthermore, there was a specific amendment to the Defence of India Plan in 1941 which contemplated a shift in the western defensive focus away from Afghanistan to the borderlands contiguous with Persia.

In addition, the media coverage and analysis at the time show that this was not some obscure anxiety fretted over by Whitehall mandarins channeling Alexander the Great. The universal, multi-national and apolitical consideration of the issue gives force to the conclusion that this was a widely appreciated and understood factor, irrespective of social or political class. Neither were there political or wartime censorship forces operating in 1941 that would have served to impact these accounts.

The event-linked evidence in the chapters above is drawn from materials that date specifically from July to September 1941. It is also helpful to recall the place of the Raj in the global geopolitical system at the time. I am referring here to the role that the Raj played in forming and informing individual and collective assumptions about “how the world was” and how it functioned. This provides necessary additional

context to understanding the way in which memory and history are constructed, discussed further below. As regards the place of the Raj prior to independence, I would concur with the historian Phillip Darby (writing about postwar British defence policy east of Suez), who comments:

India was the centre-piece: to some extent both the object and the source of British power east of Suez ... it was generally understood that the security of India was Britain's overriding concern. In this sense the protection of India was part of an ingrained pattern of thought. It was above politics: it went beyond the issue of the moment. It was the touchstone to which policy must return ... the defence of India and the defence of Empire cannot be disassociated.¹⁸⁰

With the outbreak of war, the Empire again came to the fore as part of the machinery of conflict, its policy drivers, its language and symbols.¹⁸¹ Keith Jeffrey, in the *Oxford History of the British Empire*, elegantly captures the underlying current of Empire and Imperialism during the Second World War:

The British Empire was sustained in large measure by the convenient belief held by non-British people that armed forces could be summoned up at will for immediate deployment in any part of the world. For most of the Empire's history this was indeed a fantasy. It was certainly so in times of peace. Only in war, most clearly during the Second World War, did the Empire approach the otherwise mythical status of a formidable, efficient and effective power system, prepared to exploit its apparent limitless resources, and actually able to deploy forces throughout the

world. The Second World War marked the greatest and the ultimate 'revival' of British Empire.¹⁸²

Even as late as 1943, London was dreaming of a postwar world where the Empire offered a steadying postwar hand, arm-in-arm with the nascent American superpower.¹⁸³ The speed of change postwar was extraordinary. This was despite the lack of any clear external signs that the Empire was heading for rapid postwar liquidation (and it is ironic that it was this very concern that Churchill famously declaimed to the Mansion House in November 1942).¹⁸⁴ India in 1947, Palestine in 1948, the Suez Crisis and independence for the Sudan in 1956 and Kenya in 1960 were followed by rapid decolonisation processes in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. By the end of the 1960s only shadows, legacies and oddities remained. Writing only a score of years after 1945, the historian Robert Rhodes James was able to remark that: "In the late 1960s it is becoming somewhat difficult to believe that the British Empire ever existed".¹⁸⁵

With the rushed grant of independence in 1947, and with its unique status within the framework of Empire, the end of the Raj was the beginning of the end for the Empire. Darby has described the impact of independence thus: "At a single stroke, the basis for Britain's imperial power was gone. Without the Indian Empire, Britain might still be a great power but it was no longer an Imperial power in the full sense of the term".¹⁸⁶

It is also important to recall what actually transpired in Persia during the balance of the Second World War as regards India. No genuine threat of German invasion of Persia, let alone India (from the west), ever presented itself. With the entry of the United States into the war in December 1941, the complexion of things changed significantly. The defensive nature of the invasion of Persia – protection of India and British oil supplies – became, as the war in the east progressed, primarily a strategic and logistical act, being the Persian Corridor supplies to the Soviets.

From the perspective taken by this thesis, Indian independence in 1947 marks the extinction of the defence of India as an extant geopolitical fact for historical accounts of the Persian invasion written after that date. However, it is of course not the case that geopolitical changes alone are sufficient to explain the absence of defence of India concerns from contemporary historical accounts of the invasion. It is far too simplistic to suggest that the continued existence of a factor is necessary for its ongoing recognition or inclusion into historical narratives. So while as a matter of logic it can be described as *a priori*, it is necessary to examine what additional factors might explain the absence of the defence of India factor from accounts of the invasion. Drawing on the field of memory studies, I will put forward four propositions that seek to explain this.

Proposition 1 – the Raj was part of the collective memory of Britain prior to 1947 and represented an important “lieu de mémoire” within that collective memory.

The term “collective memory” is commonplace but in this context is to be distinguished from ideas that were developed by Freud and Jung in the early part of the twentieth century. Those ideas sought to draw from within the human psyche certain types and frameworks of collective memories. The pioneering work of Maurice Halbwachs in the field of memory studies (also in the early twentieth century) used the term “social frames” to distinguish his notion of collective memory from these nascent psychiatric descriptions. Aleida Assmann has explained the concept of social frames in terms of the external versus internal inputs into the creation of individual memory:

Human beings do not live in the first person singular only ... They become part of different groups whose “we” they adopt together with respective social frames. A social frame is an implicit or explicit structure of shared concerns, values, experiences, narratives. The family, the neighborhood, the peer group, the generation, the nation, the culture are such larger groups that individuals incorporate into their identity ... To be part of a collective group such as the nation one has to share and adopt the group’s history, which exceeds the boundaries of one’s individual life span.¹⁸⁷

Another contributor to the field of memory studies, Nancy Wood, explains the way in which this conception of collective memory should be considered:

... whether individual or collective – not as a repository of images, stored in some subterranean gallery of our thought but as the selective reconstruction and appropriation of aspects of our past that respond to the needs of the present ...

collective memory – or national or public memory – [is] essentially performative, ie. as only coming into existence at a given time and place.¹⁸⁸

What these concepts suggest is that the notion of collective memory is fluid and liable to change. It is a shared or common set of assumptions about a state of affairs or set of facts that inform individual memory. To use Pierre Nora's concept¹⁸⁹, I would argue that the Raj represented an important and much valued *lieu de mémoire* for Britain and Anglophonia, comprising a part of the collective memory that was extant in 1941, and effectively throughout the period of the Second World War and until 1947. It is that extant collective memory that can be seen in the surveyed archival materials, the mass media accounts and in Churchill's history of the invasion in *The Second World War* (discussed further below). In particular, a close reading of the archival materials clearly shows the operation of the existence of the Raj (and the defence of India) as an assumption in the process of invasion decision-making. It is often referred to in a manner that can be described as implied, indirect or assumed in those materials, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Proposition 2 – the act of Indian independence in 1947 can be usefully described as an “impact event” and was subsequently “forgotten” within Anglophone collective memory.

The concept of “impact events” was introduced by Anne Fuchs in her multi-disciplinary analysis of the Allied bombing of Dresden in the Second World War. Fuchs in a fashion extends the notion of *lieu de mémoire* to identify certain events which subjectively and asymmetrically become historically significant:

Impact events can be defined as historical occurrences that are perceived to spectacularly shatter the material and symbolic worlds that we inhabit ... From the perspective of our normal frames and modes of comprehension, impact events appear as seismic historical occurrences that are nearly always defined by extreme forms of violence that turn our known worlds upside down.¹⁹⁰

Fuchs draws upon the work of moral philosophy in order to understand the significance of these impact events within twentieth century history. This line of thought suggests that much of twentieth century history has unfolded via the paradigm of total war; impact events are the instrument by which (violent) ends and beginnings take place, thereby effecting: “a lasting change in the material world, the natural environment and the symbolic order”.¹⁹¹ Fuchs makes it clear that the concept of an impact event is one that does not need to be reduced to a single, short-dated event such as the Dresden firebombing, and uses the example of the Holocaust:

Such events are not only often the effect of long term planning but also that their reception can be delayed. The impact of the Holocaust further highlights the close affinity of impact events with trauma, and with consequent repression and displacement as powerful agents of the displaced memory. Trauma is a rupture that prevents the cognitive assimilation of the impact event; in therefore communicates a haunting legacy.¹⁹²

I would argue that the loss of India (itself a violent and dramatic act) can be seen as an impact event, applying the thinking proposed by Fuchs. The key difference in approach is that the loss of India, rather than being an act that created an event which then becomes the historical narrative, was an act that created a void in the narrative fabric, which in turn created an opportunity for a preferable and more acceptable account to take its place. The effect was that the Anglophone collective memory of the Second World War has had its Imperial component displaced (or to use Fuchs' term, shattered) by the war narrative. This is what generates the preferred path for the subsequent histories of the invasion – the predominant analysis of the Second World War by Anglophone historians is one which draws on a new cultural memory of the war years that ignores/forgets the Raj. This new cultural memory puts the war and its indicia in the spotlight (as a resounding victory with its postwar partners the Americans) rather than the Empire (a crushing emotional loss of arguably ill-gotten gains). To some extent this was made possible because an alternative narrative existed – the preferable, glorious and victorious account of the Second World War. This new cultural memory had a ready store of *lieux de mémoire* – Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain, the Spitfire, Churchill, Montgomery, the Blitz and many others. These war generated symbols are now central to Britain's Second World War cultural memory.

Memory studies also offer an insight into the way in which the concept of forgetting can be understood within the framework of collective memory. Bill Schwartz has observed that:

The conceptual problem which memory itself, as an object of study, presents ... [is that] memory and forgetting are not two separate practices, but are interlinked, the one a function of the other. There is never one without the other.¹⁹³

Schwartz here is writing about process by which social and racial perceptions (in this case, the place and dominant power of the “white man” as an output of Empire and the threat generated to this by decolonisation) which may be unspoken, still exist within the framework of memory. This analysis is useful for the purposes of this thesis if it is turned on its head; the existence of a memory and a truth about the past can similarly become “unspeakable” where that memory becomes inconsistent when faced with new forces:

If an entire historical experience has disappeared from contemporary memory, or by some means has been repressed so it has little or no purchase on current public discussion ... These memories do not simply vanish from the social landscape.¹⁹⁴

A similar theme has been considered in the context of modern France and its reflections and memories of Vichy during the war. Henry Rousso has commented that:

There may also be tension between such group memories and what might be called the ‘dominant memory’, that is, a collective interpretation of the past that may even come to have official status ... There may also be tension between, on the one hand, the ‘voluntarist’ memory that builds monuments, decorates graves, and buries heroes and, on the other hand, latent or implicit memory, subject to repression and

therefore to slips, lapses or silences – manifestations of the return of the repressed. For study reveals that, even at the social level, memory is a structuring of forgetfulness. These same tensions also exist in the writing of history. Whether professional or amateur, the historian is always a product of his own time and place. He stands at a crossroads in the byways of collective memory.¹⁹⁵

The point here is that the process of forgetting is inter-twined with the process of remembering. My analysis would suggest that the impact event has acted to create a vacuum, and resonates clearly with the themes that Schwartz identifies as relevant to understanding this notion of forgetting. The postwar world was one in which Imperial pretensions no longer had “no purchase on current public discussion”. I will now discuss the reasons for this change.

Proposition 3 – the process of forgetting is linked to the changed normative attitudes towards Imperialism postwar.

Why is it that the Raj in particular has been stripped from the historical narrative of the invasion of Persia, rather than other factors? I would argue that the changed normative attitudes towards Imperialism postwar, which can be identified in a number of places, are key. Schwartz has commented about the changing attitudes towards the British Empire in the British domestic sphere:

By the end of the 1950s the empire was coming so completely to signify the past that it was almost impossible to remember that it once it had symbolized the present ... the speed of social transformation from, say, 1955 (the time of Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden) to 1965 (Harold Wilson) was staggering. In 1955 the

values of empire could still be justified by national figures in public life as they were, unadorned, without qualification, embarrassment or anxiety ... with great speed, the Empire had become a thing of the past, not only chronologically but politically and socially.¹⁹⁶

A recent history charting the strong links between Scottish families and involvement in Indian military and civil service in the nineteenth century provides an insightful comment:

The truth is that for my parent's generation, and for mine too I think, the subject of the British Empire in India was unmentionable. The memory of it was a huge embarrassment, a chapter in our island story that we wanted to skip.¹⁹⁷

These changed normative attitudes have been identified by historians as one of the causes of the decline of the British Empire. Ronald Hyam has summarised the various explanations that historians have proposed into four groupings – nationalism and self-determination within colonies; imperial over-stretch; collapse of morale and self-will postwar; and international factors and UN criticism.¹⁹⁸ Within these factors, both explicit and implicit, one can identify changed attitudes.¹⁹⁹ Hyam and Roger Lewis both describe the postwar international arena as involving obvious geopolitical changes, such as the Cold War, the superpower role of the United States and the emergence of the UN. What is more important is the context and the framework of ideas that were both the genesis for and which were created by these postwar

developments. These ideas involve a change in attitudes, perceptions and, importantly, normative attitudes towards imperialism. Hyam comments:

The British empire rose, flourished, and declined in a particular set of international contexts. The way it operated depended not only on favourable external and geopolitical circumstances, but also on the feasibility of imperial control ... What happened in the international sphere after the Second World War gradually but decisively reinforced the sense that a global empire was not only beyond Britain's means, *but was now also threatening its prestige and reputation, and becoming a liability*. The cold war determined the main outlines of British policy. Because of it, Britain had to satisfy the nationalists, side with the USA, strengthen the Commonwealth and square the United Nations.²⁰⁰ (my italics)

It is ironic that Hyam is able to remark (correctly) that the existence of the Empire represented a threat to the prestige of Britain postwar, yet the 1901 War Office memo referred to above (page 23) speaks of the potential loss of India as a death blow to the very same prestige! Roger Lewis goes so far as to describe Britain as being "Public Enemy Number One" within the UN postwar, and refers to the "transformation of international society at the United Nations" which had become a moral authority that fostered multiculturalism, multiracialism, decolonisation and peace. Further, Lewis states that in the postwar period, for the British public, the UN had become a symbol of the "hope of mankind".²⁰¹ For Britain, the Empire was entirely inconsistent with these ideals. Correlli Barnett referred to these factors in *The Collapse of British Power*, and argued that key to the understanding of the weakened position of the Empire postwar was a moral revolution dating from the

first half of the nineteenth century. In contrast to the ruthlessness and commercial opportunism that had propelled the Imperial project during the eighteenth century this was subsequently diluted by moral squeamishness and sentimentality.²⁰² John Darwin picks up this theme:

The Empire ceased to be regarded as an asset to exploit ... Imperialism was merely a superficial popular sentiment and the British adopted a whimsical lack of realism in their foreign policy. Little wonder then that at the first sign of colonial discontent the will to rule quickly triumphed over hard-headed *realpolitik*, all the more so since, as a result of these moral failings, the British had allowed their empire to become a colossal albatross.²⁰³

I do not suggest that these changed normative attitudes represent the sole explanation for the decline and fall of the British Empire. Unsurprisingly, the view held by most of the historians referred to here is that the question is a complex one not irreducible to single factors. What is important is the way in which these factors illustrate the change in attitudes towards the Empire, both at the level of international relations and forums such as UN, but also at a domestic level. What we have therefore is a changed set of attitudes that feed into and create revised collective memory of the invasion of Persia that is an easy and preferred alternative to that containing the Empire.

Historical events, which can subsequently be identified as impact events (as per Fuchs) appear to contain within them an essential, subjective value component. I

would suggest that this subjective component is founded on some level of ever-changing moral perspective ascribed to events at a given point in time. Considering the list of impact events which Fuchs identifies from the Second World War – Dresden, the Holocaust, the bombing of Hiroshima – what separates these events from others (for example, the Battle of Britain or the destruction of Berlin by Soviet forces in 1945) appears to be ethical or value based. Fuchs suggests a link between the military and technological quality of such events and the ethical dimension – “signature events that underlie the destructive potential of a modernity that divorced technological progress from ethical reflection”.²⁰⁴

In applying this thinking to the broad panorama of the Second World War, there is certainly not a detectible formula or methodology that enables one event to be distinguished from another by its moral or ethical quality. For instance, is it correct to say that the bombing of Dresden was more (morally or ethically) egregious than the bombing of Coventry or London? Is there a measure (for example, loss of life) that serves as a denominator that allows for the assessment of such events as impact events? Returning to the definition – “[impact events comprise] a lasting change in the material world, the natural environment and the symbolic order” – I would suggest, as Fuchs does, that the analysis can be more subtle and that impact events should not simply be reduced to temporally singular acts (such as the atom bomb on Hiroshima) but can be more nuanced in time (the Holocaust) and not necessarily occasioned only by death and destruction.²⁰⁵

There is therefore a link between a change in normative attitudes, the characterisation of an event as an impact event, and the process of collective memory creation (or in this case, forgetting). The actual (legal) loss of the Raj represented an impact event in a factual sense. It served to shatter existing perceptions and comprehensions. But this alone does not explain why the defence of India has slipped from the invasion narrative. It is the “new” normative attitudes postwar, entirely inconsistent with Imperialism and the Raj, that illustrate the nexus between these various strands.

Proposition 4 – Churchill’s account is a direct result of his own deeply held beliefs about Empire and disregarded postwar changes.

Churchill’s account of the invasion correctly places defence of India concerns within the framework of invasion decision-making. As mentioned above, the books of *The Grand Alliance* were written in 1948. There is abundant evidence that Churchill remained ardent in his belief in the Imperial project and the centrality of India to it for the remainder of his long life. It is helpful to recall that the lives of Churchill, and indeed the majority of the senior British military and civilian decision-makers in the Second World War, coincided with the apotheosis of Empire, having been born in the 1870s and 1880s – Churchill was 65 at the outbreak of the war.²⁰⁶ They were “Victorian” in the sense that they were alive during the defining, iconic and almost legendary events that are now part of the mythology of the British Empire.

Churchill, who had served in the North West Frontier Province in 1897 and at the famous cavalry charge at Omdurman in 1898, owed much to nineteenth experience and perspective:

[For Churchill] India was a part of the history, the power and the glory of England. With sorry and regrets he saw her slip from the Raj into independence. When Wavell visited him in London shortly after the surrender of Japan and his resignation as Prime Minister, he reminded Wavell when parting 'Keep a bit of India!' ... In reminding the House of the hour of triumph at the end of the Second World War, he accused the [

Attlee] Government of betraying the nation: 'It is with deep grief I watch the clattering down of the British Empire, with all its glories and all the services it has rendered to mankind'.²⁰⁷

It is certainly the case that Churchill, objectively, subjectively, rationally and emotionally, saw India as the essence of Empire and its eventual disappearance as a tragedy. As the historian Savrepalli Gopal has observed, in describing Churchill's perspective at the end of his career:

From start to finish Churchill was unshaken in his conviction that British rule in India was both good for India and advantageous to Britain ... basically he could not accept that Indians genuinely wanted self-government or that Britain was no longer able to sustain an empire ... 'History will record' Churchill told Eisenhower and Dulles in Bermuda in 1953, 'that Britain's desertion of her duty in India was the most serious political blunder of the past decade. I may personally not live to see all of the unfortunate results that will flow from that tragedy, but there are people around this table who will come to see that this act is certain eventually to bring grief and sorrow to the entire Western World' ... *His last words to his last Cabinet in April 1955 included the wish that his colleagues*

would weave 'still more closely the threads which bound together the countries of the Commonwealth or, as he still preferred to call it, the Empire'. The refusal to part mentally and emotionally with empire made India Churchill's blind spot.²⁰⁸ (my italics)

In contrast with subsequent historians, Churchill was either not attune to or concerned with the adverse impressions that become associated with Imperialism. In my view it is for this reason that Churchill's account is as it is. The inclusion of references to the defence of India are able to be explained both because the account was written contemporaneously with Indian independence, but, more importantly, represents the world view of Churchill that was unchanged from his time as a subaltern in India. As he wrote in his 1930 autobiography, *My Early Life*: "On the whole, after forty-eight hours of intensive study, I formed a highly favourable opinion about India ... of the great work that England was doing in India and of her high mission to rule these primitive but agreeable races for their welfare and our own".²⁰⁹

The invasion of Persia in 1941 is fascinating as a microcosm of the larger forces at work in that pivotal year of the twentieth century. All of the elements are there – the collision of the old and the new; dying Empires fighting with new Empires in the wings; nineteenth century Great Power rivalry and antecedents of the Cold War rivalry to come. All fought over territory that has for hundreds of years been a geostrategic magnet for competition and war, and remains so to this day. A proper and complete understanding the twentieth century history of Iran is necessary to enable one to clearly consider that country's place in the world today, as we stand at

the beginnings of perhaps a new era of international relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Finally, I do not at all wish to suggest that this relatively small corner of the Second World War is now the forum for wholesale revision. Rather it points to the way in which memory, forgetting, accepted narratives and collective memories can creep upon an account of events. It gives great weight to the essential humanity that informs and creates the discipline of history.

* * * * *

APPENDIX A
GOVERNORS-GENERAL AND VICEROYS OF INDIA (INFORMAL TITLES USED)

Governors-General

Warren Hastings	1773 –1785
Sir John Macpherson	1785 – 1786
Lord Cornwallis	1786 – 1793
Sir John Shore	1793 – 1798
Sir Alured Clarke	1798 – 1798
Lord Wellesley	1798 – 1805
Lord Cornwallis	1805 – 1805
Sir George Barlow	1805 – 1807
Lord Minto	1807 – 1813
Lord Hastings	1813 – 1823
John Adam	1823 – 1823
Lord Amherst	1823 – 1828
William Butterworth Bayley	1828 – 1828
Lord Bentinck	1828 – 1835
Sir Charles Metcalfe	1835 – 1836
Lord Auckland	1836 – 1842
Lord Ellenborough	1842 – 1844
William Wilberforce Bird	1844 – 1844
Sir Henry Hardinge	1844 – 1848
Lord Dalhousie	1848 – 1856
Lord Canning	1856 – 1858

Viceroys

Lord Canning	1856 – 1862
Lord Elgin	1862 – 1863
Sir Robert Napier	1863 – 1863
Sir William Denison	1863 – 1864
Sir John Lawrence	1864 – 1869
Lord Mayo	1869 – 1872
Sir John Strachey	1872 – 1872
Lord Napier	1872 – 1872
Lord Northbrook	1872 – 1876
Lord Lytton	1876 – 1880
Lord Ripon	1880 – 1884
Lord Dufferin	1884 – 1888
Lord Lansdowne	1888 – 1894
Lord Elgin	1894 – 1899
Lord Curzon	1899 – 1905
Lord Minto	1905 – 1910
Lord Peshhurst	1910 –1916

Lord Chelmsford	1916 – 1921
Lord Reading	1921 – 1926
Lord Irwin	1926 – 1931
Lord Willingdon	1931 – 1936
Lord Linlithgow	1936 – 1943
Lord Wavell	1943 – 1947
Lord Mountbatten	1947 - 1947

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APPENDIX B
THE SHAHS OF PERSIA DURING THE PERIOD

The Qajars

Agha Muhammad	1787 – 1797
Fath-Ali	1798 – 1834
Muhammad	1834 – 1848
Nasir ed-din	1848 – 1896
Muzaffar ed-din	1896 – 1907
Muhammad Ali	1907 – 1909
Sultan Ahmad	1909 – 1925

The Pahlavis

Reza	1925 – 1941
Muhammad Reza	1941 – 1979

* * * * *

APPENDIX C
CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

1800	Sir John Malcolm's first mission to Tehran.
1801	Commercial and political treaties concluded with Fath-Ali Shah by Malcolm.
1806	Ratification of 1801 treaties by the Government of India.
1804-13	First Russo-Persian War. Treaty of Gulistan.
1807	Treaties of Tilsit and Treaty of Finkenstein.
1809	Anglo-Persian Treaty of Tehran.
1812-14	Further revisions to Anglo-Persian Treaty of 1809.
1826-1828	Second Russo-Persian War. Treaty of Turkmanchay.
1828	Termination of Persian alliance by Britain.
1834	Death of Fath-Ali Shah. Succeeded by Muhammad Shah.
1839	Initial unsuccessful Russian invasion of Khiva.
1839-1842	First Anglo-Afghan War.
1842	Destruction of Elphinstone's Army.
1843	Annexation of Sind by Great Britain.
1845-1846	First Anglo-Sikh War.
1848-1849	Second Anglo-Sikh War. Annexation of Punjab.
1854-1856	Crimean War.
1856-1857	Anglo-Persian War following the capture of Herat by Persia.
1857	Indian Mutiny.
1866	Annexation of Tashkent and Khojand by Russia.
1868	Annexation of Samarkand by Russia.
1872	Grant of the Reuter Concession by Persia.
1873	Annexation of Khiva by Russia.
1878-1880	Second Anglo-Afghan War. Treaty of Gandamak.
1885	Pandjeh Incident.
1899-1902	Second Boer War.
1904	Russo-Japanese War.
1905	Russian Revolution of 1905.
1907	Anglo-Russian Convention for the partition of Persia.
1917	Bolshevik Revolution.
1919	Third Anglo-Afghan War. Anglo-Iranian Agreement proposed by Curzon. Paris Peace Conference.
1920	Establishment of the Soviet Republic of Gilan.
1921	Russo-Persian economic treaty. Curzon agreement formally rejected by the Majlis.
1926	Reza Palahvi becomes Shah.
1935	Government of India Act passed by British Parliament.
1938	The Anschluss.
1939	Second World War.
1941	22 June, launch of Barbarossa. 21 August, Operation Countenance.

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APPENDIX D
MAP 1

[MAP APPEARS AS A SEPARATE FILE]

APPENDIX E
MAP 2

[MAP APPEARS AS A SEPARATE FILE]

APPENDIX F
MAP 3

[MAP APPEARS AS A SEPARATE FILE]

APPENDIX G
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¹ See Anders, Wladislaw, *An Army in Exile*, (1949, Nashville).

² For an overview of the forced resettlement of Polish non-combatants in the Second World War see: Piotrowski, Tadeusz (ed), *The Polish Deportees of World War II*, (North Carolina 2004); Gross, Jan, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia*, (1988, Princeton). For a more contemporary account that takes into consideration the broader pattern of Soviet deportations, see Snyder, Timothy, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*, (2010, London) pp.117-197.

³ There is a significant debate and body of literature over the use of the name Persia or Iran, which covers a vast field including, among other things, the semantic and political significance. For the purposes of this thesis, Persia will be used throughout, as it is both the name more frequently used by the British during the Second World War (at Churchill's request in 1941 to avoid confusion with Iraq in correspondence, and I suspect also for slightly romantic reasons). Where quotations refer to Iran the original has been kept.

⁴ There were in fact a series of operational names as the invasion involved mixed forces and different geographical points. See Stewart, Richard, *Sunrise at Abadan: The British and Soviet Invasion of Iran*, (1988, Connecticut) pp.18-19.

⁵ There are differing accounts of the number of casualties, from as low as 17: *Paiforce: The Official Story of the Persia and Iraq Command 1941-1946*, (1948, London) p.70.

⁶ See Vail Motter, T H, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, (1952, Washington) in particular the Tables and Appendices from p.481.

⁷ For example, see McFarland, Stephen, "Anatomy of an Iranian Political Crowd: The Tehran Bread Riot of December 1942", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (1985 17:1 51-65).

⁸ For an overview of the political developments in Persia during the period, see Gheissari, Ali and Nasr, Vali, *Democracy in Iran: History and the Quest for Liberty*, (2006, Oxford), pp.46-51. See also Lenczowski, George, *Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948: A Study in Big Power Rivalry*, (1968, New York) Appendix 5: A Note on Five Iranian Political Parties during World War II pp.325-328.

⁹ Field Marshall Sir John Greer Dill, GCB, CMG, DSO (25 December 1881 – 4 November 1944).

¹⁰ Clement Richard Attlee, 1st Earl Attlee, KG, OM, CH, PC, FRS (3 January 1883 – 8 October 1967).

¹¹ Sir Reader William Bullard, KCB, KCMG, CIE (5 December 1885 – 24 May 1976).

¹² Leopold Charles Maurice Stennett Amery, CH (22 November 1873 – 16 September 1965).

¹³ Reynolds, *In Command*, op cit, p.253.

¹⁴ Reynolds, *In Command*, op cit, Chapters 14-15. Reynolds writes that: "Far more than his previous works, *The Second World War* quotes at vast length from the minutes and telegrams he wrote at the time. Churchill turned this feature into a virtue, insisting in the preface to volume 1 that these documents afforded a unique record of war at the top as viewed at the time." pp.68-69.

¹⁵ *ibid*, p.223-224.

¹⁶ Churchill, *Grand Alliance*, op cit, p.423.

¹⁷ Field Marshall Archibald Percival Wavell, 1st Earl Wavell, GCB, GCSI, GCIE, CMG, MC, PC (5 May 1883 – 24 May 1950).

¹⁸ Churchill, *Grand Alliance*, op cit, p.424. While Wavell was one of the many senior military figures who fell foul of Churchill during the war, the attribution of the telegram and the reference to Indian defence in it is simply related to the position of Wavell as Commander-in-Chief (India) at the time, not an attempt to discredit or reduce the significance of the factor.

¹⁹ *ibid*, p.430.

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- ²⁰ *ibid*, p.431.
- ²¹ Reynolds, *In Command*, *op cit*, p.501.
- ²² For an overview of the health of Churchill during the war years and subsequent, see Moran, Charles, *Winston Churchill: The Struggle for Survival 1940-1965*, (1966, London).
- ²³ Reynolds, David, *In Command*, *op cit*, p.239.
- ²⁴ Churchill, *Grand Alliance*, *op cit*, p.466.
- ²⁵ *ibid*, see p.486 and p.745.
- ²⁶ Reynolds, *In Command*, *op cit*, p.255.
- ²⁷ Reference to the invasion, the broader historical continuum and the place of Persia is limited to Ashley Jackson, who refers to the historical role of Persia as a buffer state: *The British Empire and The Second World War*, (2006, London) p.156.
- ²⁸ Woodward, Llewellyn, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World: Volume 2*, (1971, London) p.23-25.
- ²⁹ Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran 1914-1948: A Study in Big Power Rivalry*, (1949, Cornell University Press) p.256.
- ³⁰ Bullard, Reader, *The Camels Must Go – An Autobiography*, (1961, London), p.226.
- ³¹ For an overview of the coup, see Elliott, Matthew, *Independent Iraq: The Monarchy and British Influence, 1941-1958*, (1996, London).
- ³² Yergin, Daniel, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power*, (1991, Touchstone, NY), pp.335-6.
- ³³ Hinsley, FH, *British Intelligence in the Second World War: Its Influence on Strategy and Operations Volume 2*, (1981, London).
- ³⁴ See Muller, Rolf-Dieter & Ueberschar, Gerd, *Hitler's War in the East: A Critical Assessment*, (2002, Berghahn, NY), p.87.
- ³⁵ Kitchen, Martin, *British Policy Towards the Soviet Union during the Second World War*, (London 1986), p.91.
- ³⁶ War Cabinet, Chiefs of Staff Committee, "General Strategy", 31 July, 1941, item 11.
- ³⁷ Cecil, Robert, *Hitler's Decision to Invade Russia 1941*, (London, 1975).
- ³⁸ JIC, Report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee, "Developments in Iran (Persia)", JIC (41) 228, 2 June 1941, p.3.
- ³⁹ Defence Committee (Operations), "Eastward Extension of the War in the Middle East", DO (41) 4, 28 July 1941, p.3.
- ⁴⁰ Stewart, Richard, *Sunrise*, *op cit*.
- ⁴¹ Rezun, Miron, *The Iranian Crisis of 1941*, (1982, Bohlaus Verlag GmbH, Koln, Wien).
- ⁴² *ibid*, p.72.
- ⁴³ Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran*, *op cit*.
- ⁴⁴ Lenczowski, George (editor), *Iran under the Pahlavis*, (Stanford, 1978).
- ⁴⁵ Laqueur, Walter, *The Soviet Union and the Middle East*, (London, 1959).
- ⁴⁶ Spector, Ivar, *The Soviet Union and the Muslim World 1917-1958*, (Seattle, 1959).
- ⁴⁷ Kitchen, *British Policy*, *op cit*.
- ⁴⁸ Sicker, Martin, *The Bear and the Lion: Soviet Imperialism and Iran*, (1988, New York).
- ⁴⁹ Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran*, *op cit*. p.254.
- ⁵⁰ Kitchen, *British Policy*, *op cit*. p.55. The remainder of Kitchen's account of the invasion makes no mention of defence of India concerns. See also, Keeble, Curtis, *Britain, the Soviet Union and Russia*, (2000, London).
- ⁵¹ War Office, *Paiforce: The Official Story of the Persia and Iraq Command 1941-1946*, (1948, London).
- ⁵² Motter, *The Persian Corridor*, *op cit*.
- ⁵³ Amirsadeghi, Hossein (editor), *Twentieth Century Iran*, (1977, London), p.55.
- ⁵⁴ Monroe, Elizabeth, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East 1914-1956*, (1963, London), p.89.

⁵⁵ *ibid*, p.91.

⁵⁶ Jeffrey, Keith, "The Second World War", *op cit*, p.318.

⁵⁷ Robert Anthony Eden, 1st Earl of Avon, KG, MC, PC (12 June 1897 – 14 January 1977).

⁵⁸ Eden, Anthony, *Memoirs: The Reckoning (Volume 3)*, (1965, London), p.273.

⁵⁹ Hastings Lionel Ismay, 1st Baron Ismay, KG, GCB, CH, DSO, PC (21 June 1887 – 17 December 1965) from Ismay, Hastings, *The Memoirs of General Lord Ismay*, (1960, New York).

⁶⁰ Attlee, Clement, *As it Happened*, (1953, London).

⁶¹ Colville was Assistant Private Secretary to Churchill. Colville, John, *The Fringes of Power: Downing Street Diaries 1939-1955*, (1985, London). It is interesting to note that the index to this work does not even include "India" as a reference.

⁶² Bullard, Reader, *The Camels Must Go*, *op cit*.

⁶³ Sir Alexander George Montagu Cadogan, OM, GCMG, KCB, PC (25 November 1884 – 9 July 1968).

⁶⁴ The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan 1938-1945, Dilks, David (ed), (1971, London), p.402. The editor in a footnote comments: "Russian forces moved in simultaneously. The purposes were to suppress German influence, capture the oilfields and secure a route to the Caspian".

⁶⁵ Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, 1st Earl of Halifax, KG, OM, GCSI, KCMG, GCIE, TD, PC (16 April 1881 – 23 December 1959).

⁶⁶ Bryant, Arthur, *The Turn of the Tide – A History of the War Years Based on the Diaries of Field Marshall Lord Alanbrooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff*, (1957, Doubleday, New York), p.262.

⁶⁷ Wavell, Archibald, *The Viceroy's Journal* (1973, Oxford University Press, edited by Moon, Penderel). Wavell himself comments: "I have never kept a diary or any record of my life other than a small book in which I set down in what part of the world I am in each month. Since this war began and I have become involved in great events I have regretted that I have not kept a note of certain happenings and conversations. Now that I have been appointed Viceroy I think I will try to put down at the time some note of matters and impressions which may of interests from the personal or historical point of view", p.xiv.

⁶⁸ Sykes, Christopher, *Wasmuss: The German Lawrence*, (1936, London)

⁶⁹ Hambly, Gavin, *The Cambridge History of Iran Volume 7: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, (1991, Cambridge) pp. 241-242.

⁷⁰ Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran*, *op cit*, p.156.

⁷¹ Seydi, Suleyman, "Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence Activities in Iran during the Second World War", *Middle Eastern Studies* (2010 46:5 pp.733-752). See also Kurowsi, Franz, *The Brandenburger Commandos: Germany's Elite Warrior Spies in World War II*, (2005, Pennsylvania). One of the more fascinating sources identified for this thesis is a translation of the memoirs of a German Abwehr spy, Bernhardt Schultze-Holthus, published in London (in translation) in 1954. His almost singlehanded activities in Persia following the invasion are the stuff of a boy's own adventure. Incredibly, Miron Rezun casts doubt on the identity of Schultze-Holthus, suggesting that he was in fact one Ilya Svetlov, Azerbaijani born double agent, on the payroll of the Soviets.

⁷² See Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, *op cit*, p.11.

⁷³ Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, *op cit*, p.82.

⁷⁴ Cadogan Diaries, *op cit*., p.390-1.

⁷⁵ Woodward, *British Foreign Policy*, *op cit*, p.9.

⁷⁶ Muller, *Hitler's War in the East*, *op cit*.

⁷⁷ Motter, *The Persian Corridor*, *op cit*, p.481.

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- ⁷⁸ Greaves, writing in Amirsadeghi, Hossein (editor), *Twentieth Century Iran*, op cit, incorrectly states that Iran became the only alternative route to the Arctic to convey materials to Russia.
- ⁷⁹ Greaves, Rose Louise, *Persia and the Defence of India 1884-1892*, (1959, London). p.i.
- ⁸⁰ *The Cambridge History of Iran*, op cit, Chapter 11, p.424.
- ⁸¹ Greaves, *Persia*, op cit, p.192.
- ⁸² Wright, Denis, *The English Amongst the Persians: During the Qajar Period 1787-1921* (1971, London), p.11.
- ⁸³ Wright refers to some contact as early as the thirteenth century when Geoffrey de Langley was sent by King Edward I in 1290 seeking military assistance against the Ottomans, *ibid*, p.2.
- ⁸⁴ *The Cambridge History of Iran*, op cit, Ch.11, p.374.
- ⁸⁵ Major-General Sir John Malcolm, GCB, KLS (2 May 1769 – 30 May 1883).
- ⁸⁶ Wright, op cit, p.4.
- ⁸⁷ Richard Colley Wellesley, 1st Marquess Wellesley, Earl of Mornington, KG, PC, PC (Ire) (20 June 1760 – 26 September 1842).
- ⁸⁸ Mount, Ferdinand, *The Tears of the Rajas: Mutiny, Money and Marriage in India 1805-1905*, (London, 2015).
- ⁸⁹ See Chapter 3 of Wright for a detailed description of the complex protocol, formalities, prestige and ceremony associated with these early contacts with the Qajars.
- ⁹⁰ The treaty of Finkenstein was signed in West Prussia in a castle of that name which was subsequently destroyed by the Red Army in 1944.
- ⁹¹ Gilbert Elliott-Murray-Kynynmound, 1st Earl of Minto, PC (23 April 1751 – 21 June 1814).
- ⁹² Cited in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, op cit, Chapter 11, p.382.
- ⁹³ Sir Harford Jones-Brydges, 1st Baronet, PC, DL (12 January 1764 – 17 March 1847).
- ⁹⁴ For an analysis of this event, see Ingram, *Britain's Persian Connection*, op cit, Chapter 5.
- ⁹⁵ Wright, op cit, p.6.
- ⁹⁶ Kaye, John William, *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir John Malcolm, GCB, Late Envoy to Persia, and Governor of Bombay, from Unpublished Letters and Journals*, (1856, London), p.3.
- ⁹⁷ Greaves, Rose Louise, "Iranian Relations with Great Britain and British India, 1798-1921", *The Cambridge History of Iran*, op cit, p.384.
- ⁹⁸ Ingram, *Britain's Persian Connection* op cit, p.98.
- ⁹⁹ Wright, op cit, p.8. Sir Gore Ouseley, 1st Baronet, GCH (24 June 1770 – 18 November 1844).
- ¹⁰⁰ *ibid*, p.14-15.
- ¹⁰¹ Once again, these various revisions to the treaty with Persia represented the fluid and often contradictory nature of the British involvement in Persian affairs. Wright comments that the second edition of the Definitive Treaty, known as the Treaty of Tehran: "was less satisfactory [for the Persians] than the 1812 version. Nevertheless, given the circumstances in which they found themselves after the Treat of Gulistan, they could scarcely afford to be choosers and almost any treaty was better than no treaty with Britain, the only European power capable of affording them protection against the Russians". *ibid*, p.15.
- ¹⁰² *ibid*, p.16.
- ¹⁰³ For a recent account of Eldred Pottinger, Herat and events leading up to the destruction of Elphinstone's army, see Dalrymple, William, *Return of a King: The Battle for Afghanistan* (2014, London).
- ¹⁰⁴ Wright, op cit, p.59.
- ¹⁰⁵ *ibid*, p.60-61.

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- ¹⁰⁶ Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864 - 1914 - A Study in Imperialism*, (1968, Yale University Press), p.7.
- ¹⁰⁷ See Gail Marzieh, *Persia and the Victorians*, (1951, London).
- ¹⁰⁸ See Greaves, *Persia*, op cit, p.196.
- ¹⁰⁹ *ibid*, pp.207-8.
- ¹¹⁰ Letter from Curzon to Lord George Hamilton, 19 September 1899, cited in Greaves, op cit, p.207.
- ¹¹¹ *The Cambridge History of Iran*, op cit, p.421.
- ¹¹² Siegel, Jennifer, *Endgame: Britain, Russia and the Final Struggle for Central Asia*, (2002, London), p.xv.
- ¹¹³ Greaves, Rose Louise, "Some Aspects of the Anglo-Russian Convention and its working in Persia, 1907-1914", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (1968: 31:1 69-91), p.74.
- ¹¹⁴ *ibid*, p.82, fn. 61.
- ¹¹⁵ Wright, op cit, p.172.
- ¹¹⁶ The relevant text of the memoranda that constituted the Constantinople Agreement is as follows: "Sir Edward Grey is as yet unable to make any definite proposal on any point of the British desiderata; but one of the points of the latter will be the revision of the Persian portion of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 so as to recognize the present neutral sphere as a British sphere ... The Imperial Government confirms its assent to the inclusion of the neutral zone of Persia in the English sphere of influence. At the same time, however, [the Imperial Government] regards it as equitable to stipulate that the districts adjoining the cities of Isfahan and Yazd, forming with them an inseparable whole, should be reserved for Russia in view of the interests that Russia possesses there; a part of the neutral zone which now forms a wedge between the Russian and Afghan frontiers and touches Russia's frontier at Zulfiqar, must also be included in the Russian sphere of influence."
- ¹¹⁷ Cited in Kennedy, Paul, "'Appeasement' and British defence policy in the inter-war years", *British Journal of International Studies* (1978: 4: 161-177), p.161.
- ¹¹⁸ Cited in Sicker, Martin, *The Middle East in the Twentieth Century*, (2001, Connecticut), p.126.
- ¹¹⁹ *ibid*, p.3.
- ¹²⁰ Darwin, op cit, p.378.
- ¹²¹ See Katouzian, Homa, "The Campaign Against the Anglo-Iranian Agreement of 1919", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 1998 25:1, 5-46.
- ¹²² Wright, op cit, p.178-179.
- ¹²³ It has been suggested that the role of Reza Khan in the coup of 1921 was not without British influence: See Hambly, Gavin, *The Cambridge History of Iran Volume 7: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, (1991, Cambridge) pp.219-220.
- ¹²⁴ *ibid*, p.241.
- ¹²⁵ Gibbs, N H, *Grand Strategy Volume 1: Rearmament Policy*, (1976, London) p.832.
- ¹²⁶ Sicker, op cit, p.130.
- ¹²⁷ Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran*, op cit, p.69.
- ¹²⁸ Cited in Sicker, Martin, *The Bear and the Lion: Soviet Imperialism and Iran*, (1988, New York) p.37.
- ¹²⁹ Stewart, *Sunrise*, op cit, pp.16-33.
- ¹³⁰ Martin, *The Bear and the Lion*, op cit, p.46-47.
- ¹³¹ *ibid*, p.30. Taken from the text of the proposed Four Power Pact, as amended by Stalin and submitted by Molotov to von der Schulenburg on 25 November 1940.
- ¹³² *The Cambridge History of Iran*, op cit, p.242.
- ¹³³ CHAR 20/36/4, WSC to Secretary of State for India, 8.4.1941.

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- ¹³⁴ Papers of Sir John Dill, DILL 3/1/12, p.3.
- ¹³⁵ Papers of Sir John Dill, DILL 3/2/6, Letter from WSC to Auchinleck, copy Dill, August 1941.
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- ¹⁴⁷ Butler, LJ, *Britain and Empire: Adjusting to a Post-Imperial World* (2002, London), p.xii.
- ¹⁴⁸ CAB 79/13 War Cabinet Joint Planning Staff "Operations in Iran (Persia) Note by the Joint Planning Staff" 26.07.1941.
- ¹⁴⁹ War Cabinet, Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee, JIC (41) 265, "An Advance by Germany Southward from the Caucasus", 3 July 1941, p.1.
- ¹⁵⁰ CAB 79/13 Minutes of the War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee, 29 August 1941, p.3.
- ¹⁵¹ Draft telegram to the Prime Minister of Australia prepared by the Chiefs of Staff Committee, COS (41) 281st Meeting, 14.08.1941.
- ¹⁵² Memo by the Joint-Intelligence Sub Committee "Possible Scale of Attack on Area in Iraq and Persia", JIC (41) 539, 5.09.1941. It is interesting to note the War Cabinet Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee paper, "An Advance by Germany Southward from the Caucasus" 3 July 1941. Appendix C of this memorandum contains an overview of the suitability of Iran for military operations: "Iran, although it has been the scene of successful British military operations, is by no means an ideal theatre of war. Poor communications, great heat in summer, snow road-blocks at high altitudes in winter, tropical diseases in the low coastal areas, regions with little or no drinking water, numerous mountain torrents in the spring – are all factors necessitating special pre-vision ... The highest parts of the mountain ranges are, of course, unscalable, but over most of the country all arms could move freely; this would favour the attack rather than the defence. Cavalry could operate from nearly everywhere, but large formations would be limited by shortage of water and forage transport difficulties." p.9.
- ¹⁵³ Hauner, Milan, *India in Axis Strategy: Germany, Japan, and Indian Nationalists in the Second World War*, (1981, London), p.123.
- ¹⁵⁴ *ibid*.
- ¹⁵⁵ Prasad, *Defence of India*, *op cit*, p.xxi.
- ¹⁵⁶ *ibid*, p.93.
- ¹⁵⁷ For a detailed discussion and analysis of the 1941 Defence Plan see Prasad, *op cit*, p. 88.
- ¹⁵⁸ *ibid*, p.94.
- ¹⁵⁹ Curren, James and Seaton, Jean, *Power without Responsibility: The press and broadcasting in Britain* (1998, Routledge, London), p.60.

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- ¹⁶¹ *ibid*, p.620. See also Orwell, George, *Seeing Things As They Are: Selected Journalism and Other Writings*, (Selected and Annotated by Davidson, Peter) (London, 2014).
- ¹⁶² *The Times*, 7 August 1941, p.5.
- ¹⁶³ *The Manchester Guardian*, 26 August 1941, p.4.
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- ¹⁶⁸ *The Times of India*, 19 July 1941, p.6.
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- ¹⁷¹ *The Times of India*, 10 September 1941, p.7.
- ¹⁷² *New York Times*, 20 June 1941, p.E6, "Iran".
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- ¹⁷⁴ *New York Times*, 25 August 1941, p.14, "Iran is the Old Meeting Place of Britain and Russia", Anne O'Hare McCormick.
- ¹⁷⁵ *New York Times*, 26 August 1941, p.4, "Middle East Strategy", Hanson Baldwin.
- ¹⁷⁶ *New York Times*, 26 August 1941, p.C18, "March into Iran".
- ¹⁷⁷ *New York Times*, 17 September 1941, p.8, "Iran is Regarded as Allied Bastion", Ray Brock.
- ¹⁷⁸ *The Washington Post*, 26 August 1941, p.14.
- ¹⁷⁹ *The Washington Post*, 27 August 1941, p.11.
- ¹⁸⁰ Darby, Phillip, *British Defence Policy East of Suez 1947-1968*, (Oxford, 1973), p.3. It is worth noting that William Roger Louis gives Suez in 1956 greater significance in term of the end of the British Empire: "The dismantling of the Empire began first in Asia, with the granting of independence to India and Pakistan in 1947 and to Ceylon and Burma in 1948. All except Burma remained in the Commonwealth, providing a psychological cushion during the era of decolonisation. In 1948 the British were driven out of Palestine, in [art because the United States intervened in favour of the Zionists and the creation of the state of Israel. It might be tempting to regard these events as a pre-ordained decline and fall, but it did not seem so at the time to those who hoped to rejuvenate the Empire in Middle East and Africa. With India lost and Palestine shrugged aside, Britain would develop Africa as a replacement for India, and the oil of the Middle East would sustain Britain as a great world power ... The Sudan became independent in early 1956; it is interesting to speculate how the end of the British Empire might have come about had it not been for the Suez crisis later in the same year. Suez revealed the extent of British military and financial weakness as well as the Empire's dependence on the United States". Louis, William Roger, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonisation*, (2006, IB Taurus, London), p.46.
- ¹⁸¹ *ibid*, p.35.
- ¹⁸² Jeffrey, Keith, "The Second World War", *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume IV*, (1998 Oxford) p.306
- ¹⁸³ See Louis, William Roger, *Imperialism at Bay 1941-1945: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire*, (1977, Oxford Clarendon Press).
- ¹⁸⁴ "I have not become the King's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire" Speech to the Mansion House entitled "The Bright Gleam of Victory", 10 November 1942, cited in Churchill, Winston, *The End of the Beginning: War Speeches*, (1943, London), p. 265.

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- ¹⁸⁵ James, Robert Rhodes, *Churchill: A Study in Failure*, (1970, Wiedenfeld & Nicholson, London), p.193.
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- ¹⁸⁸ Wood, Nancy, *Vectors of Memory: Legacies of Trauma in Postwar Europe*, (2011 Oxford), 1999, p.2.
- ¹⁸⁹ *Les Lieux de mémoire* is a seven volume work that was compiled under the direction of French historian Pierre Nora between 1984 and 1992. *Les Lieux de mémoire* sought to offer France a history from the perspective of its most salient memories – "sites" or "realms" of memory that have been invested with enduring and emotive symbolic significance. This is a wide ranging spectrum of symbols, institutions, commemorative events, important dates, texts, mottos and historical sites. For a lengthy discussion of the work, see Wood, op cit, chapter 1.
- ¹⁹⁰ Fuchs, Anne, *After the Dresden Bombing: Pathways of Memory, 1945 to the Present*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p.12.
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- ¹⁹² ibid, p.11.
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- ¹⁹⁴ ibid, p.54.
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- ¹⁹⁷ *The Tears of the Rajas*, op cit, p.5.
- ¹⁹⁸ Hyam, Ronald, *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation 1918-1968*, (2011, Cambridge), p.xiii.
- ¹⁹⁹ See, Lewis, William Roger, *The Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonisation* (2006, IB Taurus), p.28.
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- ²⁰⁵ Fuchs, op cit, p.11.
- ²⁰⁶ The dates of birth for some of the key British decision-makers: Churchill 1874; Dill 1881; Ismay 1887; Eden 1897; Brooke 1883; Pound 1877; Attlee 1883; Wavell 1883.
- ²⁰⁷ Voigt, Johannes, *India in the Second World War*, (1987, Arnold-Heinemann, New Delhi), p.279.
- ²⁰⁸ Gopal, Savrepalli, "Churchill and India", in Blake, William & Louis, William (eds), *Churchill*, (1983, Oxford), p.470-471.
- ²⁰⁹ Churchill, Winston, *My Early Life*, (The Collected Works of Sir Winston Churchill), (1973, London), p.118.