

our sea communications in the Eastern Mediterranean and our land communications in Egypt, Palestine and Syria.

Hitherto the defence of the island had been considered only on the basis of attack from the West. But now it was necessary to provide against a possible attack by an enemy established in Turkey. In these changed circumstances, General Wavell had determined to increase the garrison of Cyprus, and I decided to adhere to his plan by reinforcing the troops there as soon as possible by one division. The Minister for Defence and the Chiefs of Staff approved this plan accepting the principle that measures to ensure the retention of Cyprus being part of the consolidation of our position in the North, must come before the offensive in the Western Desert.

Accordingly on the 12th July I decided to send to Cyprus the 50th Division (Major-General W. H. Ramsden), just arriving from England, and also the 3rd Hussars (less one Squadron) to replace the 7th Australian Divisional Cavalry Regiment as a mobile armoured reserve. The move of these troops and 90 days reserves of supplies and munitions was completed by the 29th August thanks to the efficient arrangements made by the Royal Navy.

Work on the construction of the defences began at once and is now approaching completion.

At the end of October the 5th Indian Division relieved the 50th Division in order to release a British Division for service in the Caucasus. This relief took place without incident between the 2nd and the 8th November, again owing to the efforts of the Royal Navy.

I wish to record my appreciation of the sound judgment and energy shown by Major-General Ramsden in his direction of the preparation of these defences and of the excellent work done by the 50th Division in their construction. I would also like to add my appreciation of the unfailing help and co-operation of the Governor of Cyprus, H.E. Sir William Battershill, K.C.M.G., and of the acting Governor, Captain J. V. W. Shaw, both of whom did everything in their power to assist the work.

IRAN.

13. While the work of consolidation in Syria was still in its initial stages, it was becoming increasingly evident that it would be necessary to eliminate German influence in Iran.

For some time past nationalist feeling in that country had been rising against Great Britain and Russia and by the end of 1939 there was a well organised German community of about three thousand, almost every one of whom could be relied upon to give as much of his attention to the designs of the Fatherland as to the technical work on which he was ostensibly engaged.

The expulsion of the Germans had been the subject of an exchange of views between London and Moscow, and between the War Office, Commander-in-Chief, India, and myself for some time, when on the 24th July, I received a cable from the Chiefs of Staff informing me that there was general agreement that the Germans must be expelled as soon as possible. If joint British and Russian diplomatic pressure were unavailing, both Powers were intending to take joint military action to enforce their demands.

The enterprise entailed the loan of troops from the Middle East as well as the release of the 10th Indian Division from North-eastern Syria. On

the 29th July I arrived in England and had the opportunity of discussing, among other matters, the measure of support the Middle East could afford. I was reluctant to spare more troops than absolutely necessary because of the heavy demands for garrison duties and because it would upset the re-organisation and re-equipment essential to the early resumption of the offensive in the Western Desert. But the success of the operation was of the greatest importance to the common defence of India and the Middle East.

The scale of assistance required from the Middle East grew, in the first place because it was feared that trouble might develop in Iraq and then because it was believed that the Iranians were likely to offer considerable resistance. First I despatched the 9th Armoured Brigade (late 4th Cavalry Brigade) still organised on a truck basis only. The 5th Indian Division (less the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade Group and one field regiment) followed.

Fears of serious resistance however proved groundless, and the 5th Indian Divisional Column had only reached a point about 50 miles within Iraqi territory when the Iranians gave in. The march of the column continued, however, as the Division was needed in Iraq until another arrived from India.

At dawn on the 25th August Russian troops entered Iran from the north and, occupying Tabriz, advanced along the south-western shore of the Caspian, while our troops entered from Iraq in the Ahwaz-Abadan area and in two columns from Khaniqin. The 9th Armoured Brigade formed part of the northern column which rapidly overcame opposition in the Paitak Pass and reached Shahbad on the morning of the 27th August. The Persians offered little real opposition either to the British or the Russian advance, and on the 28th August the Shah ordered all resistance to cease.

On the 8th October the 9th Armoured Brigade returned from Teheran, and on the 18th October the last elements of the 5th Indian Division also reached the Middle East.

TURKEY.

14. Turkey's reactions to German threats had always been of the greatest moment to ourselves, and now that we had a common frontier her attitude was of even greater consequence. The end of the Syrian campaign and the pacification of Iraq were causes of relief to Turkey because our forces were now in direct contact with her southern frontiers. The outbreak of the Russo-German War, however, caused her misgiving since our new ally was her traditional enemy.

It was most important that the Turks should offer the utmost resistance to a German invasion. From a purely strategical point of view the country fell naturally into our defensive system, as in it the enemy's communications would be most vulnerable to attack, and I was anxious to be able to engage the enemy before he emerged from the mountains of Anatolia into the plains of Syria and Iraq. I was therefore glad when at the end of July, the Chief of the Turkish General Staff, on behalf of the President, made a tentative approach, having as its object the renewal of staff talks on the lines of those held in the Spring. Unfortunately this step was abruptly revoked, the Turkish General Staff having reason to believe that their