

operations in Persia, without, as has hitherto been the case, being distracted by the large administrative responsibilities inseparable from the control of the bases and lines of communication in Iraq and Southern Persia, and the need for keeping in touch with the complicated political situation in Iraq.

Briefly, the reorganisation consists in the setting up of an L. of C. and base area in Southern Iraq and South-western Persia under an Inspector-General of Communications and a local defence commander, and the transfer of Northern Iraq to the control of the Ninth Army thus ensuring unity of command along the length of the Anatolian frontier, should an enemy threat to Syria and Iraq materialise through Turkey. In this event such unity of control is in my opinion essential, if only to ensure efficient co-operation between the Army and the Air Force, and the most economical use of the available air forces. This reorganisation was decided upon after long and careful examination by qualified staff officers of all three services and has the full approval of the three Commanders-in-Chief.

This reorganisation produces, in my opinion, and I believe in that of the A. O. C.-in-C., a workable system for the conduct of operations in Persia and along the Anatolian frontier, and ensures the maximum of efficiency and the minimum of friction which can be expected in view of the admittedly complicated nature of the problem.

As Commander-in-Chief, Middle East Forces, I was prepared to meet the threat to our Northern Front once this reorganisation had been effected, assuming that the requisite forces were available.

3. Regarding the proposal to set up an independent army command in Iraq-Persia, I feel that the main difficulty is in the provision and control of the air forces which will have to work with the army in this new command.

In my opinion it would be impossible to expect the new Commander-in-Chief to accept the responsibility of the new command unless a definite allotment of air forces is made to it. This allotment must not be susceptible to reduction except with the consent of the Commander-in-Chief, or by order of the Chiefs of Staff. Any arrangement whereby the full control of all air forces on the entire Caspian—Cyrenaican front is vested in a single A. O. C.-in-C. located at Cairo or elsewhere, while the land forces on the same front are divided into two separate commands, each under an independent Commander-in-Chief directly responsible to the Chiefs of Staff in London, must, in my opinion, result in constant friction and consequent inefficiency, and may well be disastrous in times of crisis. It would be impossible, I think, to expect a Commander-in-Chief in Baghdad to be dependent on an A. O. C.-in-C. in Cairo for the provision of the air forces essential to the carrying out of his plans. He would, presumably, have an A.O.C. available as an adviser and local air force commander, but this officer would not be able to give any decision on important matters of policy without the approval of the A. O. C.-in-C. The position of the C.-in-C. would, I submit, be intolerable and is not one which I could myself accept.

I fully realise that any arbitrary division of air forces between the two commands is likely to be uneconomical and to deprive the air of

that flexibility which it now possesses under the existing organisation, whereby the C.-in-C. and A.O. C.-in-C., Middle East, have the same territorial responsibilities so far as the Caspian—Cyrenaican front is concerned. This is one of the chief objections I see in the new proposals.

4. At present the Tenth Army in Persia has a full staff and is reasonably well off for signals. The administrative staff of the newly constituted Iraq-Persia L. of C. area and base could, I think, be transformed without great difficulty or delay and be made into the administrative staff of the new G. H. Q., Iraq-Persia. A new General Staff will, however, have to be created from nothing, as no such organisation exists at present. This will entail a great deal of work and the transfer of a mass of information and accumulated knowledge from the present G. H. Q., Middle East, to the new G. H. Q. The new Commander-in-Chief can hardly be expected to rely on any organization in Cairo for information. He must control his own machinery.

I estimate that it will take at least six weeks to two months before the new G. H. Q. can begin to function with adequate efficiency. During this interim period it is inevitable that G. H. Q. Middle East should remain in control of Iraq and Persia otherwise the whole system of operational control is liable to break down. The result of such a breakdown at such a time does not need to be stressed.

5. There are many other important adjustments which must be made in the administrative, training and operational fields before the transfer of responsibility can be effectively completed. These will all take time, as it is physically impossible to conclude them in the course of a few days. I have already had experience of these difficulties in the comparatively recent transfer of this sphere from G. H. Q. India to G. H. Q. Middle East, so I do not speak without knowledge. The result may well be that the process of changing over will not be completed before active operations start in Northern Persia. This would produce a most unsatisfactory and probably critical situation.

6. As regards the chances of successfully preventing an enemy advance through Persia from the Caucasus towards the head of the Persian Gulf, I agree generally with the General Staff estimate as to the minimum forces required. In my opinion the following are needed:—

One Army H. Q. and Signals.

Two Corps H. Q. and Signals.

Two Armoured Divisions.

Seven Infantry Divisions (including two for internal security duties and L. of C. protection in Iraq and Persia, but excluding any garrison required in the Persian Gulf itself).

It is essential that all these troops shall be fully mobile including the divisions allotted for L. of C. protection and internal security duties.

I estimate the minimum requirements in air forces at some twenty-five squadrons which will also need to have a high degree of mobility. This full mobility is of prime importance as without it there is no likelihood whatever of being able to conduct a successful defence of Northern Persia.

It is well known that there is insufficient transport available in the Middle East to give these forces full mobility and at the same time to enable an offensive to be conducted in the