

THREAT OF INVASION REMOVED.

27. The sustained series of victories in South Russia and the successful operations in North Africa both render a German threat to North Persia in 1943 progressively more and more unlikely. The initiative now lies with the Allied Nations and it is our duty to retain that initiative and bring the maximum force to bear on the German war machine from as many directions as possible. It was to be expected, therefore, that the forces in my Command would be reduced and that the status of the Command would require revision.

In January I received orders to despatch the 5 British Division to the Middle East Command and finally on 23rd January I was summoned to a conference with the Prime Minister in Cairo. On 10th February the 56 (London) Division was also ordered to the Middle East Command. I decided therefore to re-group the remaining formations within the Command and issued orders for their location in the general area Mosul-Kirkuk.

On 17th February I left for Cairo to take up my new duties.

28. In concluding my despatch I wish to bring to notice the hard work and continual effort of the staff and signals on my Headquarters in building up the Command into a fighting organization in so short a time.

The Commanders Tenth Army, 3 and 21 Corps and their subordinate Commanders have given wholehearted co-operation in the training and equipment of their formations and in overcoming difficulties inherent in their re-organization.

The Commanders of the L of C Areas and Sub-Areas in carrying out their tasks deserve credit for what they have accomplished under conditions of great distances, bad weather and communications.

In General Anders, Commanding the Polish Army in the East, I have found a most willing collaborator who carries great prestige with his troops and who has worked tirelessly to get his troops into line with British methods.

General Connolly of the United States Persian Gulf Service Command has shown willing co-operation and understanding in the taking over of the Persian L of C by the American forces on their recent arrival.

I found in Air Vice Marshal H. de Crespigny, Royal Air Force, a willing co-operator in the preparation of the plans for the defence of North Persia and am much indebted to him for his sound advice on all matters affecting our two services.

Commodore C. F. Hamill, Royal Navy, Senior Naval Officer Persian Gulf, rendered most valuable service not only in the control and allotment of shipping between the various Persian Gulf ports but also by the ready manner in which he met emergency demands for sea transport.

I am also much indebted to Mr. J. A. de C. Hamilton of the Minister of State's Branch Office in Baghdad for his help and advice on many subjects for which civil and military responsibilities overlap.

Throughout my period in the command the willing co-operation of His Majesty's Embassy in Baghdad and the Legation in Teheran have been of the greatest assistance.

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