THE RAF'S SPECIAL FORCE BEFORE THE SPECIAL DUTIES SQUADRONS

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Abstract: In 1923 – almost two decades before the formation of its Second World War Special Duties (SD) squadrons – the RAF created a 'special force' of airmen who conducted highly unorthodox small-scale operations. Like all Special Forces operations, the tactical-level actions by these airmen generated operational level and strategic effects in uncertain, often hostile, and politically sensitive regions. Between the World Wars, these special airmen, the RAF Special Service Officers, integrated air, civil, and social actions to ensure peace and stability on frontiers of the empire and, in the process, helped to preserve the independence of the Royal Air Force.

INTRODUCTION

When the Prime Minister created the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in July 1940, the RAF allocated two Lysanders to form 419 Flight at RAF North Weald to support the insertion, extraction and re-supply of agents in France and the Low Countries. By February 1942, there were two SD squadrons, 138 and 161, based at RAF Tempsford. Additional SD squadrons were created to support the SOE in all operational theatres of the Second World War. The UK's current Special Forces Air Component proudly and rightly maintains the traditions and ethos of those wartime airmen. But there was another, much older RAF 'special force', that few know about today and about whom little was widely known at the time. Between the World Wars, RAF Special Service Officers (SSOs) in the Middle East, Africa and the North-West Frontier of India integrated the effects of air power into environments dominated by civil concerns, guerrilla fighters and political machinations. Theirs is a story almost unknown to modern airmen and Special Forces.

SPECIAL FORCES AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Before looking at who the RAF SSOs were and what they did, it is helpful to understand the modern meaning of Special Forces (SF). In the simplest of terms, SF perform special operations, which, according to Professor Colin Gray, are 'small-scale, clandestine, covert or overt operations of an unorthodox and frequently high-risk nature, undertaken to achieve significant political or military objectives in support of foreign policy'.[1] Official definitions of special operations in the UK, US, and NATO, like Professor Gray's, are agnostic of Service affiliation or physical domain – air, land, or maritime. What is common, though, is the emphasis on small-scale operations in uncertain, hostile, or politically-sensitive environments to create strategic and operational-level effects that are disproportionate to the size of the force employed. What is also consistent among official definitions and explanations is the reliance of SF on mature, uniquely-trained people who see beyond the military objective and are expected to be adaptive, innovative, and self-reliant in the face of complex problems, primarily in the human domain.[2]

The UK's modern SF airmen are considered by their peers as among the best in the world at what they do. They fly their aircraft with highly enviable precision and reliability, and there is a trust that their partners in the SAS and SBS have rightly come to value and count on. But, unlike the SAS and SBS, the SF Air Component is an enabling component: a supporting function to provide air mobility and some ISR for direct action and special reconnaissance missions by the land and maritime Special Forces. However, RAF airmen once played a much more direct role in special operations on behalf of their country. Two decades before the SD squadrons of the Second World War were formed, the RAF created a cadre of specialised airmen who would go to and live in places, often alone, that were too dangerous or too remote for civilian tribal control officers charged with maintaining order in the remote regions of the empire.[3] As we will see, these unique

airmen conducted unorthodox and high-risk operations, in uncertain, hostile, and politically-sensitive regions, in order to achieve Britain's theatre and strategic objectives.

AIR CONTROL BETWEEN THE WARS

As has been well told in the pages of this journal by authors such as Peter Gray, Andrew Roe and David Hall, the story of air control began as the First World War was ending.[4] In August 1919, the British War Cabinet, looking at the long-term financial and human costs that resulted from the War, drafted a memorandum that would later become known as the 'ten-year rule'.[5] The core tenet of the ten-year rule was, '... for framing revised Estimates, that the British Empire will not be engaged in any great war during the next ten years, and that no Expeditionary Force is required for this purpose'.[6] The document, WC 616A, was intended to guide British post-war defence planning. At the strategic level, what Britain needed from the restive tribes and rickety governments in the Middle East during the inter-war period was a level of stability that allowed the creation of safe and reliable air routes to India and the Far East, and major reductions in the cost of imperial policing.[7]

Historians have noted that the ten-year rule forced a tension between the politicians and the Services.[8] Defence spending was slashed by 75% between 1919 and 1921, and remained low for the remainder of the 1920s. The Royal Navy cancelled ship-building contracts and the Army returned to its pre-war size and role as Britain's imperial policing force. Imperialists maintained that the defence of India and the transportation routes via Egypt and the Middle East were the key to continued British wealth, prestige, and status as a great power.[9] But, post-war Britain had little appetite for further military adventures or a large army. Post-war exhaustion, crushing war debt, and economic and social challenges severely influenced government spending. *The Times*' reports on Parliament's deliberations from the early 1920s are replete with members' questions and editorials questioning the imperial burdens upon the taxpayers.[10]

As part of the transition from a wartime footing back to a peacetime environment, the Army and the RAF were closing stations and dispensing of their excess equipment. Henry Probert's biography of Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Arthur Harris notes that the primary task for airmen under his command in the months after the Armistice was to receive and burn great numbers of surplus aircraft, some of which were brand new.[11]

With the ten-year rule's severe fiscal guidance and 'widespread public faith that the League of Nations obviated the need for national armies', the Cabinet focused on ways to reduce the cost of policing the empire.[12] Their conclusion was, 'the only method of effecting savings on a considerable scale is in the War Departments'.[13] At the same time, however, the RAF's continued independence as a separate Service was confronted by the Army and Royal Navy, which strived to bring their former air arms back under their own control, and resented the new competition for declining defence expenditures.[14]

To maintain Britain's primacy as a great power, imperialist politicians hoped to harness technology to control restive indigenous populations, while at the same time reducing costs. This aspect was the second point in WC 616A, 'In order to save man-power, the utmost possible use is to be made of mechanical contrivances, which should be regarded as a means of reducing Estimates'.[15] The hope was that aeroplanes and wireless offered an innovative and less costly means of policing the empire. Wing Commander C.H.K. Edmonds captured the attitude of the time in a 1923 lecture to the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) on why Britain needed to invest in air power when budgets were declining, 'First, we are all of us imperialists, and so we wish to see the empire defended as securely as possible. Second, we are all taxpayers, so we want the defence to be as economical as possible'.[16]

After years of contentious debate, the Cabinet gave the RAF a chance to show if air power could substitute for battalions as a frontier constabulary force. In October 1922, Air Vice-Marshal Sir John Salmond was installed as the General Officer Commanding of British forces in Iraq. The Army immediately reduced the garrison to four battalions (two British and two Indian). The RAF moved eight squadrons of aircraft to Iraq and, recognising that air control was an air-land effort, created armoured car companies to replace the British battalions.[17] Further reductions in the garrison would occur in the ensuing months and years until the British Army was entirely moved out of Iraq and the cost of garrisoning had dropped by almost 75%.

THE SSOs

From the very beginning of the experiment, the RAF recognised it needed an 'efficient intelligence system... whereby the earliest possible information may be given of any signs of disorder or rebellion, so that the Air [Force] may be able to take militant measures and check it in its incipient stage'.[18] The RAF took a comprehensive approach to setting up its constabulary role in Iraq, noting that '... the *essence of air control* [emphasis added] is an accurate and detailed knowledge of the people, and this necessitates constant intercourse between political and intelligence officers, and the inhabitants'.[19] This is an interesting perspective given that aeroplanes and bombing have received the majority of academic attention, publicity and credit for the achievements of the air control scheme. As we will see, in addition to gathering, analysing, and exploiting the information necessary for effective air operations, SSOs also served in a liaison function, communicating expectations and shaping perceptions among the tribesmen against whom air actions might ultimately be directed.[20]

The concept of RAF SSOs on the ground had not existed prior to the air control scheme.[21] Before 1922, the SSO concept was an Army one, usually officers providing local, internal intelligence and advice to Army commanders and units serving on the frontiers.[22] However, even prior to the air control scheme, some intelligence functions were performed by pilots and observers from the General Duties Branch who were serving

ground tours.[23] Service as an intelligence officer was generally disdained among pilots who had joined the Air Force to fly, and so the RAF intentionally incentivised the airmen it was trying to recruit for intelligence duties as SSOs by adding marks to their Staff College examination, providing an advantage during promotion, consideration for having a second language, offering flying opportunities at nearby air stations, and providing a cash allowance for horse and groom, house-boy, and interpreter.[24] Although the Air Ministry would have preferred having airmen serve as its SSOs, they discovered the pool of candidates from which to draw its air-oriented SSOs was rather shallow. The problem facing the RAF as it developed the air control scheme was that not many airmen were willing or able to be that 'face' of British imperial power among the tribes.[25] The thought of a hard, lonely existence on the edges of the empire was not an assignment which many pilots, navigators, and observers found inviting. Still, as John Bagot Glubb, one of the early SSOs, noted during a 1926 lecture, the whole success of the air control scheme depended on individuals who combined thorough knowledge of the tribes and country with a certain amount of experience as an air observer.[26]

Excepting RAF officers who had served in the Army's colonial regiments and had transferred to the Royal Flying Corps before or during the First World War, few airmen possessed the requisite knowledge of colonial administration and the regions.[27] The Army's pre-war constabulary function, especially among those officers who had served with Indian Army battalions in the Middle East or in Egypt, meant that most candidates with the inclination to work with and among indigenous peoples, and who had the language, cultural, and administrative skills necessary to work in such environments, were soldiers.[28] So, while aggressively recruiting from within their own ranks, the RAF also sought out qualified Army officers. Because of the years it took to develop the language, cultural, and life skills needed to work successfully with and among indigenous peoples, the RAF found it quicker and easier to teach soldiers how to apply air power as a tribal control measure than it was to develop an intuitive level of culture and language in airmen who had never lived the frontier life.

Major General H.P.W. Hutson, who as a junior officer served as an RAF SSO in Fallujah, Iraq, said he took the job because he was already assigned to Iraq when the First World War ended and the RAF would pay him an additional £20 (about £850 today) per month for learning Arabic—not an impossible task as he was the only Englishman at the time in the city.[29] Glubb, also an army officer was already in Iraq and learning Arabic when the RAF began looking for SSOs, so he, too, accepted a position with the RAF.[30]

UNIQUE TRAINING

When the air control scheme began in 1922, westerners seeking insight into the culture, traditions and motivations of Bedouins had little in the way of credible Arab sources to use as references. Arab sources written in English were sparse, and what documentation that did exist all but ignored the tribes and tribal culture.[31] The School of Oriental Studies,

now the London School of Oriental and African Studies, did not begin its first class until January 1917. This institution, originally created to train colonial administrators, also admitted military and other professionals to its courses.[32] It is interesting to note that by 1925, the RAF was taking advantage of the education available at the School of Oriental Studies and was sending a number of SSOs, some of whom became future senior RAF officers, there to study. Most were then assigned to Iraq for in-country language and intelligence officer training.[33]

Gerald de Gaury, an RAF SSO who went on to become the civilian political agent in Kuwait and eventually the Chargé d'Affaires in Iraq, published 'An Arabian Bibliography' in the *Journal of the Royal Central Asia Society* in 1944. He documented 200 sources of cultural, geographic, anthropological, and biological studies, including handbooks published by the Intelligence Division of the Admiralty, most of which were published before the First World War or during the inter-war period.[34] For those officers so inclined, the Royal Central Asia Society provided a cross-cutting forum of diplomats, explorers, military officers and scholars who sought to preserve Britain's imperial status through lectures, papers, and debate.[35] In addition, the Royal Geographical Society had been sponsoring and publishing the topographical, cultural and biological studies of explorers since the 1830s. This era was also a time of thoughtful and detailed travel writing. Despite the myth that airmen being posted to the Middle East tended to study *Arabian Nights* and novels,[36] the RAF SSOs had access to in-depth, fairly current and voluminous reference materials, albeit rarely from Arab sources, in order to prepare for assignments in the region.[37]

In addition to the professional journals and regional studies, the Admiralty published a collection of intelligence handbooks between 1913 and 1917 based in part on the records of pre-war European explorers and on recent military intelligence.[38] These handbooks offered detailed descriptions of the regions, settlements, routes, and inhabitants. In November 1918, the Admiralty published an updated version of the *Handbook for Mesopotamia*.[39] This four-volume, 550-page, encyclopaedia broke Iraq into sections, including Kurdistan, and provided great detail on such topics as the different tribal systems, religions, descriptions of towns and cities, census data, descriptions of the inhabitants, administrative structures, topography, history and climate. Volume 2, which covered the Shatt el-Arab, Tigris and Euphrates River Valleys and the desert border areas with Kuwait and the (now) Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, even had an assessment of the various types of mules available in the region. Similar handbooks were also produced for Syria (including Palestine) and Arabia in 1920.[40] The Admiralty handbooks were updated in the 1940s, and are still used as references today. Other semi-official references available included Gertrude Bell's *The Arab of Mesopotamia* – a two-volume collection of essays written specifically for new British officers going to Iraq[41] – and *Straight Tips for "Mespot"*, a volume of practical hints that offered the kinds of advice 'your maiden aunt would not be likely to suggest', such as 'the value of gin and whiskey to aid health'.[42]

The better SSOs knew that the best way to collect and understand the population's attitudes and opinions was gained by observing their hosts' social behaviour and participating in the locals' conversations first-hand.[43] Therefore, the most successful SSOs tended towards a combination of self-study and on-the-job training.[44] Once in their assigned regions, the officers would immerse themselves in the regional culture and, in the process, create a personal body of knowledge – their own 'intelligence database' – by learning from the locals with whom they worked and through personal study of the terrain, customs, histories and relationships among families, clans, and tribes.

As with most career paths, the SSOs tended to divide into two general categories. The first were those officers who came to the Middle East to gain experience in the primary mission of the RAF at the time (air control/imperial policing) but then went back to traditional, career-enhancing assignments that led to staff college and subsequent promotions. This group of SSOs included Air Commodore Frank Woolley, who would command No. 222 Group and later be the senior intelligence officer for Mediterranean Allied Air Forces; Air Vice-Marshal Sydney Toomer, who was the Director of Fighter Operations in 1942; Air Vice-Marshal Andrew MacGregor, who was the AOC of No 28 Group in 1945; and Air Chief Marshal Robert 'Pussy' Foster, who served as AOC RAF Malta and AOC Desert Air Force during the Second World War.[45] The thinking was that frontier service for airmen offered such a difficult experience that no matter what challenges an officer might face later in his career, the desert would prepare him for the worst. Therefore, the RAF 'sought to create a regular rotation of officers in order to broaden the base of "professional" desert experience'.[46]

The second group was those airmen who fully embraced the SSO life and stayed in the Middle East for years, foregoing promotions and command. Flight Lieutenant Guy M. Moore was intelligence officer to Group Captain A. E. Borton, Commander RAF Iraq, when the Command was formed in 1921.[47] He remained in Iraq for over six years. Flight Lieutenant Robert Jope-Slade served as an SSO in Iraq from 1924-1935, and then returned in 1938 as the British Forces Iraq intelligence officer until his death in an aircraft accident in May 1941. Flight Lieutenant George Reed served 12 years between 1922-1934. Flying Officer Ernest Howes was an SSO for more than 12 years, finishing as a Flight Lieutenant in Aden at the start of the Second World War.[48] As to be expected, some of these long-term SSOs were perceived to have 'gone native' (in the parlance of the time), thus limiting their promotions and career opportunities. Trenchard voiced his displeasure with such officers, stating he felt it 'utterly wrong that there should be British officers out there … who are not thoroughly loyal to, and in sympathy with, the opinions of their Head Offices'.[49]

SSOs IN PRACTICE

The British began the air control experiment in Iraq by creating a comprehensive map showing where the 42 major sheikhs and their tribes were generally located. Then, the

Iraqi government summoned all 42 to a conference in Samawah. Only one sheikh appeared. The next day, SSOs supported by RAF armoured car detachments were despatched to forward depots, and three forward operating bases for aircraft were established in areas where the most important tribes were sure to see them. On the following day, air operations against the tribes began.

Flight Lieutenant H Hindle James, SSO Ramadi circa 1925 in consultation with local sheiks.
Source: John Barnard from the Private Papers of H H James.

Aircraft first dropped leaflets explaining to the people that the sheikhs had been summoned to consult with the Iraqi government but had failed to appear. The messages described the consequences likely to befall the tribes if the sheikhs continued to resist the government's requests. The messages worked and within a day all 42 sheikhs had surrendered and agreed to meet with Iraqi and British officials.[50] By making the presence of the aeroplanes and armoured cars conspicuous, and the SSO physically reminding the sheikhs during face-to-face meetings of the RAF's ability and willingness to cause damage, and also ensuring the people fully understood that the Iraqi government was willing to apply the full effects of British air power should their sheikhs not comply, Britain achieved its objectives during this initial foray without dropping a bomb or firing a shot.

Glubb tells the story of one of his first experiences as an SSO. He was sent to deliver the message to a group of settlements between Baghdad and Basrah that they were to pay their taxes or else be bombed. The British tribal control officer assigned to administer the area had confined himself to the larger town in the province because he felt it too dangerous to venture out among the locals. Correspondingly, the village sheikhs were afraid to go into town and consult with the tribal control officer for fear of imprisonment. Glubb proceeded into the desert and called upon the paramount sheikh. At that point, Arab hospitality took over.

For two days, he and the sheikhs talked. Glubb learned that the issue was water: because the Iraqi government did not regulate water flow, upstream users had diverted all the water that the downstream tribes needed to irrigate their crops. Without water, the crops died, and without crops they had nothing to sell, and, therefore, no money to pay the taxes. At that point, Glubb says he admitted to his hosts that his real role had been to survey the villages, create a map and develop a target list in order that he might guide air attacks to appropriate homes in the villages. He advised the sheikhs to report to the tribal control officer or be bombed. They refused. The next day Glubb led a flight of aeroplanes to overfly the villages. The people scattered and hid, after which the RAF bombed the sheikhs' houses and scattered the villages' flocks. The sheikhs then came into town where Glubb had arranged for the Iraqi Minister of the Interior to meet with them. Glubb then mediated the meeting and an agreement was reached to regulate the water, which enabled the tribes to pay their taxes.[51]

What Glubb did was not unusual. Most SSOs went beyond simple and occasionally professional recognition of indigenous leadership. Instead they built relationships with local leaders in order to gain insight into the tribes' psychological, cultural, and sociological motivations.[52] H.P.W. Hutson described how he often visited the different tribes and small villages around Fallujah to build and maintain relationships with the sheikhs, gain insight into their situations, and address their concerns where he could. Hutson was successful as an SSO because he 'got friendly with many of the sheikhs and especially the younger chaps'.[53] His conclusion was that informal relationships enabled the formal communication and negotiation required by his duties, which gave successful SSOs the necessary insight and understanding to influence appropriately their assigned populations.

Not all applications of air power were coercive or strike-related. Sometimes aircraft were used for non-destructive operations. Unencumbered by the obstacles of overland travel in very difficult and often dangerous terrain, travel by aeroplanes made it possible for the SSOs to spend time in the more desolate reaches of the empire.[54] Frequent and regular access to isolated tribes allowed the SSOs, unlike earlier earth-bound tribal control officers, to build rapport with tribal leaders, understand the tribes' perspectives on current issues, and develop their own situational awareness.[55] SSO reports contain

details of reconnaissance flights in south-western Iraq, meetings with tribal leaders, remaining for days among the tribes, and where necessary, delivering messages from Iraqi civil authorities, warnings of impending attacks from Akhwan (Saudi) raiders, and negotiating with the sheikhs to comply with the requirements laid out by British and Iraqi authorities.[56] On other occasions, SSOs would fly in to act as mediators between the government and the tribes or between disputing tribes because of the relationships they had cultivated and their empathy with the locals' perspectives. The telegrams and operations summaries found in the archived SSO reports describe numerous SSOs' efforts to intercede on the tribes' behalf.[57]

SSOs would sometimes offer the benefits of modern medicine to those tribes beyond the reach of doctors, or in areas where the difficulty of travel would make an injured person's condition worse.[58] The RAF configured some aeroplanes as air ambulances, a capability that did not yet exist in civil aviation. SSO reports from 1923 offer examples of how these airmen used non-kinetic air power to gain influence. In April, aircraft carried doctors and medical supplies to aid the casualties of a train wreck between Baghdad and Basra. In October, the RAF found and rescued a family whose vehicle had broken down in the desert, 120 miles west of Baghdad. During the cholera epidemic of 1923, live cultures were transported from Egypt to Baghdad by air so that medical authorities could produce vaccines in bulk. The RAF then carried medical officers and vaccine doses to the villages and camps in order to stem the outbreak.[59]

A rather unusual application of air power occurred in April 1928 when an SSO in Transjordan arranged for transport aircraft to deliver airmen armed with flame-throwers to help combat swarms of locusts destroying valuable pasturelands.[60] In the Middle East and North Africa, the RAF searched for locust migration and swarming to help civilian authorities address this perennial and significant threat to the economies of the region.[61]

With RAF aeroplanes flying overhead creating the illusion of a ubiquitous government presence, the SSOs would create and sustain a perception in the locals' minds that every aeroplane overhead was looking at or for them. In Transjordan, flights were intentionally flown over recalcitrant tribes' camps 'to impress them', and to make the point even stronger, night flights were conducted in the same areas because 'aircraft flying at night leave a great impression on the Arab mind.'[62]

In 1925, the RAF SSO in Nasiriyah, Flight Lieutenant Guy M. Moore, was unable to persuade the tribes along the southern border to move away from the areas most likely to be attacked by Saudi raiders. Frustrated by their unwillingness to comply, SSO Moore requested demonstration flights from Air Headquarters and delivered a message to the sheikhs that future flights would be attack sorties. When the tribes finally began to move, SSO Moore remained overhead in the lead aircraft, observing the movement and reminding the tribes of British expectations of compliance.[63]

What the RAF learned about air power and colonial control in Iraq, Aden and Transjordan extended to other frontier regions of the empire and was then put into practice by civilian colonial administrators when local situations were permissive enough for tribal control officers to safely live and work among the indigenous populations. Prior to extending air control operations into Somaliland in 1930, the CAS noted, 'the two most important factors in this connection are reliable SSOs, and intimate knowledge on the part of the air officers concerned of the conditions of the country and of the tribal and sub-tribal villages and grazing areas'.[64]

Once Iraq achieved its independence in 1932, former SSOs moved on to other positions and other locations, passing their experiences and cultural acumen on to others. For example, Gerald de Gaury, the SSO in Iraq in the mid-1920s who served as the Chargé d'Affaires in Iraq, in 1942 raised a force of Druze irregulars in Syria and had Wilfred Thesiger, a former political officer in Sudan, as one of the squadron commanders. [65] Thesiger's boss in Sudan had been Guy Moore, the SSO in Iraq in 1925, who 'taught him to appreciate deserts and to treat the men with whom he lived and travelled as companions instead of servants'.[66]

CONCLUSION

While aeroplanes admittedly were the most visible part of the air control scheme, most researchers have missed the point made by Sir Ralph Cochrane, the commander of 5 Group, Bomber Command during the Second World War, that the success of air control depended upon the situational awareness, intelligence, and understanding provided by the SSOs. His acknowledgement of the SSOs' pivotal role in the success of the air policing concept was notable by its uniqueness. The RAF SSOs, usually alone in remote, uncertain, and politically-sensitive regions, orchestrated the inter-departmental activities (military, law enforcement, and civil) necessary to maintain the peace in their assigned regions. According to modern definitions, these airmen were Special Forces—uniquely trained, conducting unorthodox missions (especially for airmen), in high-risk areas to achieve theatre or strategic objectives. The SSOs – air-minded 'boots on the ground' – shaped the locals' perceptions, built the intelligence 'picture', and managed the application of air power, providing the critical component of air control that made colonial policing by the RAF 'work'.

NOTES

[1] Colin S. Gray, 'Handfuls of Heroes on Desperate Ventures: When do Special Operations Succeed?', *Parameters*, (Spring 1999), accessed at **http://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/parameters/Articles/99spring/gray.htm**, 13 July 2017, fn3.

[2] AJP 3.5(A), *Allied Joint Doctrine for Special Operations*, (Brussels, BEL: NATO Standardisation Agency, Dec 2013), pp. 1-1 – 1-2. Where citations from official sources are preferred, approved NATO doctrine will be used because it is unclassified, open source, agreed to by the UK and the US, and readily available to the public.

[3] TNA AIR 75/27, Air Staff Memorandum, *What Air Control Means in War and Peace and What it has Achieved*, (30 June 1930), pp. 8 – 9; TNA AIR 9/12, Air Staff Memorandum 52, *Air Control*, (Apr 1933), p. 6.
[4] Peter W. Gray, 'Myths of Air Control and Realities of Imperial Policing', (*Air Power Review* (APR) Vol 4 No 2), 'RAF Air Policing Over Iraq – Uses and Abuses of History', (*APR* Vol 14 No 1); Andrew M. Roe, 'Friends in High Places: Air power on the North-West Frontier of India', (*APR* Vol 11 No 2), '"Pink's War", – Applying the Principles of Air Control to Waziristan, 9 March to 1 May 1925', (*APR* Vol 13 No 3), 'Aviation and Guerrilla War: Proposals for "Air Control" of the North-West Frontier of India', (*APR* Vol 14 No 1); and David Hall, 'Ruling the Empire out of the Central Blue', (*APR* Vol 10 No 2).
[5] TNA CAB 23/15, WC 616A, *Minutes of a Meeting of the War Cabinet*, (15 Aug 1919), p.1. It should be noted that the term, 'ten-year rule' did not come into common use until after the principle had been formally revoked.
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[8] John Robert Ferris, *Men, Money, and Diplomacy: the Evolution of British Strategic Policy, 1919 – 26*, (London: The MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1989), p. 17; and George C. Peden, *British Rearmament and the Treasury: 1932 - 1939*, (Edinburgh, UK: Scottish Academic Press, 1979), pp. 6 – 8.
[9] David Killingray, 'Imperial Defence', *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V: Historiography*, Robin Winks, ed., (London: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 347; TNA CAB 24/71/79, GT 6477, *Memorandum by the Chief of the Air Staff on Air Power Requirements of the Empire*, (9 Dec 1918), p. 1; R.J. Wilkinson, 'The Geographical Importance of Iraq', *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, Vol. 67, No. 468, (1922).
[10] See for example, *The Times*, 'Report from House of Commons', (24 June 1920), p. 9.
[11] Henry Probert, *Bomber Harris: His Life and Times*, (London: Greenhill Books, 2001), p. 45.
[12] Brian Bond, *British Military Policy between the Two World Wars*, (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 27.
[13] TNA CAB 23/23, *Conclusions of Cabinet meeting*, (8 Dec 1920), p. 2.
[14] Sir Samuel J.G. Hoare, *Empire of the Air: The Advent of the Air Age, 1922 – 1929*, (London: Collins, 1957), pp. 54 – 56.
[15] TNA CAB 23/15, WC 616A, p. 1. Also TREA 1/12353, *Letter from Controller of Supply and Services*, (July 1919).
[16] C.H.K. Edmonds, 'Air Strategy', *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, Vol. 69, No. 474, (May 1924), p. 192.
[17] Trenchard's proposal to implement the scheme approved at the Cairo Conference clearly emphasised the integrated, air-land aspect of air control. TNA AIR 9/14, Memorandum from AM Sir H. Trenchard to Secretary of State, (28 July 1921), *Arrangements for Defence of Iraq by the Royal Air Force*, p. 2. TNA AIR 8/34, *Note on the Method of Employment of the Air Arm in Iraq*, (1 Aug 1924), pp. 1 & 5; and Sir John Salmond, 'The Air Force in Iraq', *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, Vol. 70,

No. 479, (Aug 1925), p. 485.
[18] TNA CAB 24/126, CP 3123, *Report on Middle East Conference held in Cairo and Jerusalem, March 12th to 30th, 1921*, (11 July 1921), p. 77, and reinforced in TNA AIR 9/14, ASM 20, *Lecture by Air Marshal Sir J.M. Salmond to the students of the staff college, Quetta*, undated (circa 1923), p. 7.
[19] R.A. Cochrane, 'The work of the Royal Air Force at Aden', *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, Vol. 76, No. 501, (Feb 1931), p. 97.
[20] TNA AIR 9/12, ASM 52, *Air Control, A Lecture by the Deputy Chief of the Air Staff at the Imperial Defence College*, (Apr 1933), pp. 10 – 12; 'The Role of Special Service Officers in the Air Intelligence Organization', *Royal Air Force Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 1, (Jan 1931), pp. 52 – 54, (no author given).
[21] 'The Role of Special Service Officers in the Air Intelligence Organization', p. 52.
[22] TNA AIR 2/1196, *Notes on Future Intelligence Organisation in Iraq*, (21 Dec 26), p. 1.
[23] Nicholas John Wilkinson, *Secrecy and the Media: The Official History of the United Kingdom's D-Notice System*, (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2009), p. 124; and Heinz Duthel, *Global Secret and Intelligence Service III*, (Raleigh, NC: Lulu.com, 2008), p. 205. 'Officers have been employed in intelligence duties since 1918. At the time, officers of the General Duties Branch (mainly pilots on a ground tour or who could no longer fly) performed the duty of Squadron Intelligence Officer, or aircrew on ground tours in the Air Ministry Intelligence Department. By the late 1930s there was a dedicated Intelligence Branch [in the RAF]'.
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[25] Sir John Bagot Glubb, *War in the Desert: An R.A.F. Frontier Campaign*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960), p. 70.
[26] J. B. Glubb, 'Air and ground forces in punitive expeditions', *Journal of the United Service Institution*, Vol. 71, No. 483, (Feb 1926), p. 781.
[27] Glubb, *War in the Desert*, p. 70; and Andrew M. Roe, 'Flying in the Blazing Sun: Air Control, District Intelligence Officers and Mixed Results', *British Army Review*, No. 159, (Winter 2013 – 14), p. 67.
[28] Martin Thomas, *Empires of Intelligence*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), pp. 182 – 83. TNA CO 732/41/23, *Recruitment of Intelligence Officers for Iraq & Palestine*, (20 Dec 1929 – 22 Feb 1930), provides a series of letters that detail the difficulties the RAF was having 'finding suitable officers for intelligence duties in Iraq, Egypt and Palestine'; and *Flight*, (26 Aug 1932), p. 811.
[29] IWM 4465, *Hutson Oral History Interview*, reel 1.
[30] John Glubb, *Arabian Adventures: Ten Years of Joyful Service*, (London: Cassell, Ltd., 1978), pp. 32 – 33.
[31] Robert S.G. Fletcher, *British Imperialism and 'The Tribal Question'*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 28.
[32] SOAS website, **www.soas.ac.uk/centenary/the-soas-story/early-years-1917-36/** accessed on 15 Dec 2017.

[33] RAF SSOs and staff intelligence officers who served in the Middle East and went on to senior ranks include: ACM Robert M. Foster, Air Cdre John W.B. Grigson, Air Cdre Lionel G.S. Payne, AVM Sydney E. Toomer, and Air Cdre Frank Wooley. Source: **www.rafweb.org/Menu.htm#Personnel**, accessed on 8 Dec 2017.
[34] Gerald de Gaury, 'An Arabian bibliography', *Journal of The Royal Central Asian Society*, Vol. 31, No. 3, (1944), pp. 315 – 320.
[35] Fletcher, *British Imperialism and 'The Tribal Question'*, p. 23.
[36] Priya Satia, *Spies in Arabia: The Great War and the Cultural Foundations of Britain's Covert Empire in the Middle East*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 166.
[37] An example is John G. Lorimer's six volume geographical, historical, and navigational survey, the *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia*, from 1915. It remains a tool for modern researchers.
[38] Military Handbooks of Arabia 1913–1917, Cambridge Archive Editions, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Hugh Clout and Cyril Gosme's history and evaluation of the handbooks in 'The Naval Intelligence Handbooks: a monument in geographical writing', notes that the handbooks first produced for the First World War provided a precedent for geographical and intelligence analysis through the Second World, remained valuable, despite being outdated in certain areas, through the present, *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 27, No. 2, (Apr 2003).
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[40] IWM ID 1215, *A Handbook of Syria (including Palestine)*, (1920); and IWM ID 1128, *A Handbook of Arabia*, (1920).
[41] Gertrude Lowthian Bell, *The Arab of Mesopotamia*, (Basrah, Iraq: Superintendent, Government Press, 1917), reprinted and edited by Paul Rich, (Lanham, MD: Lexington, Books, 2008), p. vi.
[42] IWM, *Straight Tips for "Mespot"*, (Bombay: Thacker and Co., Ltd., 1917), (no author given), p. 35.
[43] Martin Thomas, *Empires of Intelligence*, p. 78.
[44] IWM 4410, *Glubb Oral History Interview*, reel 1; IWM 4465, *Hutson Oral History Interview*, reel 1.
[45] **http://www.rafweb.org/Menu.htm#Biographies**, accessed on 8 Dec 2017.
[46] FO 131/436/5, Letter from Wallace to Cairo Residency, 6 June 1920.
[47] In 1921, RAF Iraq was formed out of the RAF Mesopotamian Group, with Group Captain A.E. Borton as its first commander. Borton had served in the Middle East during the First World War and supported Arab irregular forces under T.E. Lawrence during the 1917-18 Palestine and Syria campaign.
[48] **www.rafweb.org/Menu.htm#Personnel**, accessed on 8 Dec 2017.
[49] TNA AIR 8/94, *Iraq: 1927 – 1932*, 'Personal Note prepared by Sir Hugh Trenchard in regard to his views on the situation that has arisen in Iraq, in answer to a request by Sir Samuel Wilson', (28 June 1927), p. 2). Also found in TNA CO 730/114/4, same title and date.

[50] J. Salmond, 'The Air Force in Iraq', p. 496.
[51] IWM 4410, *Glubb Oral History*, reels 1 and 2.
[52] Andrew M. Roe calls this 'developing cultural acuity', going beyond just learning the language and getting to the point that one gains 'in-depth understanding of cultural norms and standards', 'What Waziristan Means for Afghanistan', *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 1, (Winter 2001), p. 42.
[53] IWM 4465, *Hutson Oral History Interview*, reel 1.
[54] TNA AIR 5/170, C.D. 72, ASM 46, *Notes on Air Control of Undeveloped Countries*, (24 Mar 1930), pp. 14 – 15; TNA AIR 5/171, C.D. 79, ASM 47, *Air Power and Imperial Defence*, (8 May 1930), pp. 7 – 8.
[55] IWM 4410, *Oral History Interview*, Lt Gen Sir John Glubb, reel 1, (26 Mar 1979); IWM 4465, *Oral History Interview*, Maj Gen H.P.W. Hutson, reel 1, (1979).
[56] TNA AIR 23/269, *SSO Reports*, provides Flt Lt G.M. Moore's records of his meetings with sheikhs and refugee leaders in Iraq's southern border region, (May – June 1925). TNA AIR 23/23, *SSO Reports*, Series of telegrams, (16 Aug 1925 – 31 Jan 1926).
[57] TNA AIR 23/23, *SSO Reports*, (10 – 12 Feb 1926); TNA AIR 23/27, *SSO Reports*, 1926; TNA 23/408, *Transjordan Intelligence*, (Oct 1927); TNA AIR 23/269, *SSO Report*, (3 Mar 1925).
[58] TNA AIR 23/269, *SSO Report*, (30 June 1925); also TNA AIR 9/12, Air Staff Memorandum 21, *The civilising influence of Medical Service advanced by aid from the Air*, (n.d., circa 1924), p. 1.
[59] TNA AIR 9/12, ASM 21, *The civilising influence of Medical Service*, pp. 1 – 2. TNA 23/408, *Transjordan Intelligence*, (Oct 1927), describes the SSO acting as a liaison with Iraqi tribes on the Syrian border and serving as a lookout for further instances of cholera.
[60] TNA AIR 23/409, *Transjordan Intelligence*, (Apr 1928). Aerial spraying technology was not pioneered until 1924 in the US, and commercial aerial crop-dusting comes much later.
[61] TNA AIR 5/171, ASM 47, *Air Power and Imperial Defence*, p. 7; A. van Huis, 'Can we prevent desert locust plagues?', *New Strategies in Locust Control*, S. Krall, R. Peveling, and D. Ba Diallo (eds), (Basel, CHE: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1997), pp. 453 – 54.
[62] Vincent Orange, *Winged Promises*, (RAF Fairford, UK: The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund Enterprises, 1996), pp. 73 – 74.
[63] TNA AIR 23/298, *Telegrams between SSO and AHQ Baghdad*, (May 1925).
[64] TNA AIR 9/18, *Somaliland Draft Substitution Scheme with covering note to CAS*, (Mar 1930), p. 3.
[65] Obituary, *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 15, No. 2, (1984), pp. 227 – 28.
[66] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, Jan 2007), accessed at on 13 Sep 2015.