

# Air Power And Colonial Control: The Royal Air Force, 1919-1939

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David E. Omissi. *Air Power and Colonial Control: The Royal Air Force 1919-1939*. (Studies in Imperialism.) Manchester: Manchester University Press; distributed by St. Martin's Press, New York, N.Y. 1990. Pp. xvi, 260. \$79.95.

This long neglected subject now appears as one of the "Studies in Imperialism" under the general editorship of John M. MacKenzie. Omissi is a Prize Research Fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford. He has done an impressive amount of research in the PRO, in private papers, and in the literature; but he missed Elmer Scoville's doctoral dissertation at Michigan State, which covered the same subject before the PRO was fully opened, and one or two other works relevant to the subject. Nevertheless, this is a very respectable scholarly study even to a helpful set of biographical notes so that the reader can look up who is being discussed.

The story is very much a history and an analysis with helpful conclusions at the end of each chapter, while in the second part the work addresses itself to the more general issues. The first part of the book starts with a discussion of the emergence of the RAF from the First World War and Trenchard's need to find a role for the RAF before the senior services, the former owners, abolished it. The two natural areas for such activities presented themselves in the North-West Frontier and Somaliland, both of which contained inhospitable terrain and flitting tribes in 1919-20. While the real story of the pursuit of the Mad Mullah was still in dispute in the 1960s, the real significance came with the cost—the campaign only set the Treasury back £150,000. That encouraged Churchill as Secretary for War and Air to propose at the 1921 Cairo Conference that the RAF take over the policing of the newly acquired mandate of Mesopotamia (now Iraq). He and Trenchard were able to claim success in the Whitehall wars and from 1920-25 Iraq became a test case for the survival of the RAF (though Home Defence also gave the RAF another string in its bow from 1922). Policing the oil-rich Middle East by air feathered Churchill's nest, enhanced Trenchard's position, gave the RAF a role, and kept the government popular for doing the job at the lowest possible cost in hard-hit postwar Britain.

Having proved the point in Iraq, it was easy then to persuade the powers-that-be that it would be only sensible to extend the concept to many other parts of the Empire. The problem was, of course, that it only worked well in rather barren areas devoid of tree cover and against tribes who were either in the open or lived in isolated villages. Flag-waving in Africa worked all right against peaceful tribes and occasionally against those who could be bombed. Using aircraft at home against Europeans was quite another matter, and so was never done for police purposes in spite of the fact that the principal RAF doctrine from 1923 was that of a deterrent air force for Home Defence. Air control could best be practiced, Omissi notes, when financial, geographic, and strategic logic all pointed in the same direction (p. 59). There were also limits, and these are examined in chapter IV, where, as throughout the book, the political as much as the operational dimensions are examined. Air power always operated in conjunction with local militia and their command, control, and cooperation were always subjects of concern to both the RAF and the Army, and occasionally the Navy. Part of the concern was the air force's development of armored cars, but there Trenchard could note that the RNAS had had them in 1914.

Omissi provides a lot of analysis of air policing from looking at the aircraft employed to the reactions of the tribes. In the second part of the work not only does he engage in thematic analysis, but also he looks at the French experience, especially in the Rif. He observes (p. 214) at the end of general conclusions that air policing and the day of air control are about

Between the world wars the main task of the RAF was to crush tribal rebellions against British rule. This study, based almost entirely on unpublished documents, shows how the independent peacetime role of air policing ensured the survival of the RAF during the lean financial times. *Air Power and Colonial Control: The Royal Air Force*, Front Cover. David E. Omissi. Manchester University Press, Jan 1, - Political Science. *Air Power and Colonial Control: The Royal Air Force (Studies in Imperialism)* [David E. Omissi] on [wsdmind.com](#) \*FREE\* shipping on qualifying offers. David E. Omissi. *Air Power and Colonial Control: The Royal Air Force (Studies in Imperialism.)* Manchester: Manchester University. formidable problems. The failure to adopt a coherent set of industrial priorities meant that the number of workers required to supply the fighting forces was also. *Air power and colonial control: the Royal Air Force, /?* David E. Omissi. Author. Omissi, David E., Published. Manchester [England] ; New York. David Omissi, *Air Power and Colonial Control: The Royal Air Force*, ( Manchester, ). In the recent war with Iraq, US air superiority was crucial in. *Air Power And Colonial Control* has 4 ratings and 0 reviews: Published December by Manchester University Press, pages, Unknown Binding. *Air power and colonial control: the Royal Air Force organisation and administration, general organisation and administration of air forces, general.* The following text is an excerpt from *Air Power and Colonial Control: The Royal Air Force*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, ). Omissi. *Air Power and Colonial Control: The Royal Air Force* by David E. Omissi Books, Nonfiction eBay!. *Air Power and Colonial Control: The Royal Air Force, (Studies in Imperialism)* by David E. Omissi at [wsdmind.com](#) - ISBN - ISBN An examination of the origins, character and effectiveness of air-policing and its role not only in offering a cheaper means of "pacification" in the inter-war years. *Air power and colonial control: the Royal Air Force*, Book. General John Jumper, 'Kosovo Victory', *Royal Air Force Air Power Review*, 2/4 *Air Power and Colonial Control: The Royal Air Force* (New York: St. The Royal Air Force, David E. Omissi in publication data Omissi, David E. *Air power and colonial control: the Royal Air Force - Studies.*

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