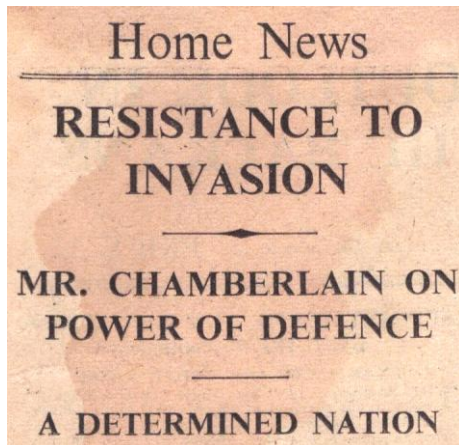


Resistance to Invasion – David Gray

The following article was printed in The Times on 1st July 1940. This is a transcript of a talk given by Neville Chamberlain and broadcast on the BBC less than two months after he resigned as Prime Minister. The speech was heard on the home and overseas services, and was relayed throughout North America.



“The first thing I want to say to you tonight is that all the members of the War Cabinet are working together in complete harmony and agreement. Anyone who lends himself to German propaganda by listening to idle tales about disunion among us or who imagines that any of us would consent to enter upon peace negotiations with the enemy, is just playing the Nazi game.

We are a solid and united nation which would rather go down to ruin than admit the domination of the Nazis. But we intend, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, to attack our enemies and meet their attacks upon us with the resolution and fighting spirit which become a great people. Though we are left alone to defend freedom and civilization, brave men and women will only be braced by the knowledge that we must now rely upon ourselves, under Providence, to win through as we have won through before.

I don't for a moment under-rate the military might which has overwhelmed the gallant French Army and reduced France to her current lamentable position. We all know that the enemy is now free to fall upon us. No doubt the air raids we have lately experienced are only the prelude to something more serious, for the Nazis are staking everything upon the chance of winning a short war. We know that they are even now completing their preparations for an attempt to invade this country. At any moment that invasion may be launched by sea and air.

But the enemy is divided from us by a more formidable anti-tank obstacle than any he has yet encountered – namely, the sea. Our Navy, which is still growing, is vastly superior to the German, and our warships must be eluded or driven off before any seaborne expedition can land on our shores. Do not forget that, even if an expedition was safely landed, it has still to be supplied, in the main at any rate by sea, with all that a modern army requires to fight on, in the face of fierce resistance.

OUR AIR STRENGTH

Then consider the position in the air. Our Air Force is stronger in numbers today than it has been since the beginning of the war, and at the same time is superior in equipment, training and morale to that of the enemy. That Air Force would have to be destroyed or driven off before the enemy could land safely from sea or air.

Then we have our land forces. At this moment there is a larger army in this country than there ever has been during the whole of our history – an army of which a large part are seasoned troops who have not only met the enemy already in battle but felt their own superiority to him. That army is every day growing stronger in numbers, in preparedness, and in equipment. Lastly we have that

other great army of men and women who are putting their whole strength into the task of furnishing us with the weapons and the food we need, or who are devoting themselves to the work of civil defence. One and all they are animated by the same fighting spirit, which will never give in.

If the enemy does try to invade this country we will fight him in the air and on the sea: we will fight him on the beaches with every weapon we have. He may manage here and there to make a break through; if he does we will fight him on every road, in every village and in every house, until he or we are utterly destroyed. If he is driven to evacuate as we had to evacuate from France, there will be nothing waiting for him off the beaches of England but death and disaster.

I have given you material reasons why we should be able to beat off an enemy attack. But we have something even stronger on our side. We shall be fighting for our own hearths and homes, and we shall be fighting with the conviction that our cause is the cause of humanity and peace against cruelty and persecution, of right against wrong; a cause that surely has the blessing of Almighty God. It would be a faint heart indeed that could doubt of our success."

There seems to be a popular misconception these days that says Britain did not stand alone in 1940, but instead had the whole of the Empire supporting her in the face of an imminent Nazi invasion. I have read it and heard it on TV.

It is true that we had one, untried, Canadian Division in the country at the time, around 16,000 men, but that was the empire's only contribution at that moment. When Chamberlain says "*Though we are left alone to defend freedom and civilization...*" he means just that. Britain was facing the whole of the might of the German armed forces alone. No one in Canada or South Africa was being bombed. No one in Australia was watching fighters dog-fighting overhead trying to keep the bombers away. No one was laying land mines and barbed wire on beaches in New Zealand because the Nazis might well come cross the next day, and no one in India was carrying out fire-watching and ARP duties all night and helping to dig out bomb victims from the wreckage of their houses. No, it was only Britain that was facing the might of the Nazi war machine, like a dam facing a massive torrent of flood water, Britain was truly standing alone.

What if the Nazis had managed to invade Britain, what if the struggle had been too great? In Britain all would have been lost. The whole country would have been subjugated; the terror that was being inflicted on the people of the other occupied countries would have been visited on us by the Gestapo and other German occupation forces. Britain would have become a farm to provide for the greater German Reich, as Hitler had already stated.

If the Germans had successfully invaded Britain, what would have happened to Canada, South Africa, India, Australia, New Zealand and all the other countries of the empire? Nothing. There would have been no change, no jackboot marching down the street in the morning. They would have shrugged and simply got on with their lives, perhaps for a while bemoaning the fate of the 'Mother' country, but not actually being affected by events taking place on the other side of the world, and they certainly would not have come cross to liberate us. Of course Britain stood **ALONE**.

Interestingly I discovered some advice that an Indian politician was giving Britain at the time which may well emphasise my point about Britain being alone. This was an article printed on the same day

as Chamberlain's speech, and I find it cut out and stuck in one of the WWII scrap books in my collection, right next to Chamberlain's article (see below).



The Article is entitled: 'Non Violence Against Hitler – Mr. Gandhi's Strange Advice.'

Mr. Gandhi (says Reuter), has addressed an appeal to "Every Briton, wherever he may be," urging non-violence instead of war for the adjustment of relations between nations.

"I do not want Britain to be defeated, nor do I want her to be victorious in the trial of brute strength," Mr. Gandhi continues. "British muscular bravery is an established fact. To win the war Britain must adopt with greater thoroughness the same work of destruction as the Germans, which would be an undignified competition."

Asking Great Britain to fight with non-violent arms, Mr. Gandhi says, "Let Hitler and Mussolini take possession of your beautiful island, your homes and allow yourselves to be slaughtered, but refuse to owe allegiance to them." Non-violence he declares has achieved considerable success in India, and England with much greater skill could make perfect this matchless weapon.

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"I have been a lifelong and wholly disinterested friend of the British people." Mr. Gandhi concludes. "Whatever happens, my love for Britain will not diminish. This appeal is prompted by that love."