

THE BATTLE OF KHORRAMSHAHR

— Iran's spirit of resistance

THE resolve of the Iranian people, their steadfastness and commitment to protecting their inalienable sovereign rights, is a reality that is slowly creeping into the awareness of western audiences.

This resolve has a far greater history however and it is only once western audiences acknowledge this, that we'll have a clear understanding of our own struggle.

Iran (formerly Persia) as a recognisable political and cultural entity has existed for 5,000 years, predating the rise and surpassing the wisdom of our current imperial powers.

It has survived conquests by Arabs, Turks and Mongols and looks set to survive the incoherence of a failing empire, hanging on for dear life by the thread of inverted realities and inept brute force.

The history of Iran is peppered with examples of the unfathomable bravery that we witnessed in April of "human chains" forming collectively to protect their critical infrastructure.

These examples empower a resolve, defiance and a civilisational consciousness that our arrogant overlords, high on their own propaganda, are incapable of comprehending, acknowledging or inspiring.

One powerful example cited by the Iranian leadership this week, is the Liberation of Khorramshahr.

Commemorated yearly, this gruelling battle during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), came to symbolise underdog victory against all the odds.

An internationally isolated and under-equipped Iran retook the city in southwest Iran from Iraq on May 24th, 1982, despite Iraq's massive military advantage via the backing of the Soviet Union, western powers and the Gulf states.

The loss of Khorramshahr in an earlier brutal battle, came as a deep national shock. Two years later Iran rallied the troops to reclaim their City of Martyrdom, reflecting a spirit of resistance and perseverance that lives on in Iran's collective memory.

Posting on X on the day of commemoration last Sunday, President Pezeshkian highlighted the battle's enduring significance: "Khorramshahr today is Iran, the Persian Gulf, and the Strait of Hormuz."

BY NILLY BROOK

"Resistance, self-sacrifice, and repelling aggression are rooted in the culture of this land."

The horrors of the Khorramshahr battles were overshadowed by the industrial scale of the savagery to come; a savagery that western powers are yet to come to terms with.

Chemical weapons were used by Saddam's forces numerous times during the Iran-Iraq war. In March 1988, Saddam used western-provided chemical weapons against Iranian soldiers, pro-Iranian Kurdish fighters and civilians.

The Halabja massacre, being the largest chemical weapons attack deliberately against a civilian population, is remembered for its unprecedented scale but these weapons were used extensively by Saddam throughout the war, claiming thousands of Iranian lives.

The international community's response to this day has been shameful.

True to form, the United States Defence Intelligence Agency initially blamed Iran for the Halabja massacre, until later evidence placed the blame squarely on Iraq. Western culpability however is a different matter.

There has been no formal apology from western powers and Germany still denies its key role.

This duplicity, this illegal behaviour from the west towards Iran is nothing new. Iran is more than familiar with the rotten games of denial, superiority, projection, extraction, domination, infiltration and savagery conducted by western powers.

Within the Islamic Republic's history alone, Iran has held firm under the relentless illegal and immoral attack of western hybrid warfare – military attacks, sanctions, assassinations, coups, cyber-warfare, state-



Iranian forces celebrate the liberation of Khorramshahr on May 24 1982

backed terrorism and sabotage.

This latest stage of the rabid empire's onslaught – its desperate thrashings to maintain power, blindly underestimating its opponent's historical resolve – this stage is depleting the empire's withering military prowess and shattering the sense of moral superiority that blinds and inhibits its own inhabitants.

After nearly three years of genocide, awareness is growing as western common sense, self-understanding shatters.

Our 'democracies' are a facade, our leaders, media, cultural establishments, civic institutions and NGOs are captured by a ruling class that operates beyond any law.

Iran has demonstrated its foresight in its unparalleled preparation for this war, they are bearing the brunt of this frontier, transcending the divisive tactics of the

west to unite collectively, through the strength of their conviction, empowered by their faith.

Our challenge in the west is to part the murky waters of moral equivalence that blights our understanding; the remnants of centuries of demonisation campaigns that persistently rumble through the collective consciousness.

Whether it's Iranophobia, Chinaphobia or Russiaphobia, we need to embrace the lived reality of anti-imperialist forces through a renewed lens, laying bare the orientalist fabrications of western primacy.

Iranians at home are uniting as they witness and experience first-hand the overt violent reality of the US/Zionist empire.

The spell of western individualism and liberty, that once may have had a hold on younger Iranian minds, disconnected from the lived reality of the SAVAK (The

Shah's secret police) and the Iraq war; this spell has lost its potency.

We have a long way to go in the UK and the west to reach that level of clarity, to effectively challenge the Eurocentric, orientalist bias that infiltrates people's thoughts; those assumed "truths" that are anything but.

The knee-jerk, default bias towards support for Ukraine and condemnation of Russia, will hopefully be transcended by a wider lens that can see Zelenski's embracement of Zionism and NATO's aggressive expansion campaign in Europe.

That instead of parroting the free-speech fable, the establishment lines of our political, economic, media, cultural and educational institutions will become patently clear.

The empire is collapsing, we need to coordinate our efforts towards fighting for a different approach, an

authentic break and ideally a different model.

The shadow of colonialism and centuries of plunder have evolved into a well-oiled international economic, PR, military war machine that is incapable of halting its path of destruction.

Iran's spirit of resistance – its commitment, sacrifice and ingenuity – has thrown a stumbling block on this path.

Instead of attacking the world that is struggling to be born we need to fix the functioning of our organism within this emerging counter-hegemony.

The domestic bubbles that pander to and nurture fear of the far right are a neoliberal trick – one that will take us down with the sinking ship.

Iran is doing the heavy lifting, fighting on the physical frontier. They have dealt with their orientalist monster – it's time that we face our own.'



Iranians formed human chains this year around power plants defying the threat of US bombings