国際会議参加報告

# 第 46 回　国際軍事史学会大会の概要

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　2021（令和 3）年度の第 46 回国際軍事史学会大会は、8 月 29 日から 9 月 3 日までの 6 日間にわたって、ギリシャ・アテネで開催された。2020（令和 2）年度はポーランドのポズナンで開催される予定であったが、新型コロナウイルス感染症の世界的な流行を受けて中止となり、今回は 2 年ぶりの開催となった。本大会は「18 世紀以降の独立戦争」を共通テーマに、オープニングセッションおよび 14 の分科会セッションにおいて、基調講演を合わせて合計 45 の発表がおこなわれた。近現代における独立戦争およびその周辺の事象を主題とした歴史研究を中心に、いずれのセッションでも活発かつ建設的な質疑応答が交わされた。

　本年は 1821 年に始まったギリシャ独立戦争から 200 周年の節目に当たるということもあり、同戦争にまつわる様々な周辺テーマの発表が多くみられた。また、全 27 カ国から参集した参加者は、いずれも各自の専門的な研究を共通テーマの問題意識に引き付けつつ、実証的な発表をおこなった。新型コロナウイルス感染症の問題もあり、東アジアからの参加者は筆者のみであったが、シベリア出兵やインドネシア独立戦争などアジアに関係するテーマを扱った発表も散見された。

　本大会は、ギリシャ国防省および同国軍の全面的支援を受けて開催され、各セッションの内容のみならず、ギリシャ陸軍の第 747 工科特殊大隊や戦争博物館を訪問する実地研修もきわめて充実していたほか、同国における戦史・軍事史研究の重要な位置付けもうかがわれた。また、マラトン古戦場をはじめとする史跡研修の機会も設けられ、古代から続くギリシャの歴史と、そこに内在する戦史・軍事史の教訓を同国がどのように捉えているのかを肌で感じることができた点も有意義であった。

　今後の開催地として、2022 年度は韓国（ソウル）、2023 年度はトルコ（イスタンブール）が予定されているが、前者については諸般の事情でポーランド（ヴロツワフ）に変更となった。

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# Beyond the "Master-narrative" of Decolonisation:
# Reconsidering the End of Empires in the 20th Century

伊藤　頌文

【要約】

　本稿は、イギリスを筆頭とする帝国史研究が第二次世界大戦後の独立運動や脱植民地化を「支配言説」として重視するあまり、今日的な諸問題との関係性が議論されていない研究上の現状を指摘する。そのうえで、イギリス帝国を事例として、東南アジアや中東、地中海における帝国の解体が決して一筋縄にはいかず、イギリスが現地に一定の影響力を残さざるを得なかったことを論じる。そして、これらの事象が期せずして同国の世界規模での軍事行動を引き続き可能にした逆説的状況に触れつつ、帝国の遺産が現代の安全保障上の課題とも連続性を有していることを明らかにする。

## Introduction

　Since the 18th century, there have occurred a number of independence wars around the globe. These independence wars have had so many influences in the modern world as well that therefore they have been an object of historical research. Especially, in the latter part of the 20th century, due to the trend of decolonisation which reflected the dissolutions of European colonial empires, the independence movements and anti-colonial struggles intensified and became one of the most fundamental transitions of the international order. Therefore, historians have actively argued the end of empires after the Second World War, often described as the era of decolonisation, and they have focused mainly on the process of independence wars and imperial retreats.

　At the same time, one should take account of the impacts and influences of the decolonisation on the contemporary world, particularly when discussing the interrelationships between current situations and its historical backgrounds. Recently, there is a tendency to refer to the geopolitical thoughts from perspective of imperial legacy. However, the contribution to this tendency from imperial history is much less, notwithstanding its broad accumulation of knowledge of modern empires.

　This paper will argue the end of colonial empires and anti-colonial torrents in the

second half of the 20th century in connection with the post-colonial context. It will also reconsider the historical implications of independence wars and decolonisation in today's world, paying more attention to the significance of imperial legacies, mainly in political and security issues.

## 1. Overview of the (Post-) Imperial History

In the latest decade of the 21st century, the world has witnessed a lot of phenomena originated in the geopolitical rivalry, which can be seen as the typical cases of power politics. Referring to those unconcealed hostilities, scholars have raised the reinstatement of geopolitics.[1] In itself, geopolitics in international relations have never been established as a specific discipline,[2] but the importance of geography has again come under the spotlight as the conflicts over 'sphere of influence' between major powers have intensified.

Concurrently with these situations, interests in empires and their legacies have also increased. Recently, one scholar argues in his controversial monograph that the legacies of empires on today's world are significant and permanent, criticising that the well-known thesis of the "clash of civilizations" does not always explain the great power contests in the past and coming decades.[3] He then indicates that "civilizations do not animate and organize themselves to clash with each other – historically, it has been the role of empires to do so on their behalf, and today it is the after-images of empires that set the clashes in motion."[4]

Besides, connections between the modern world and empires can be seen everywhere. It is simply that today's international society is a product of Western modernity since

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[1] As a typical argument of this, see Walter Russell Mead, "The Return of Geopolitics: The Revenge of the Revisionist Powers," *Foreign Affairs*, 93:3 (May/June 2014), pp. 69-79.

[2] In Japan, for example, due to the historical background that the military had used geopolitics arbitrarily until the Second World War, the term has often caused strong rejection.

[3] Samir Puri, *The Great Imperial Hangover: How Empires Shaped the World* (London: Atlantic Books, 2020). Regarding the "clash of civilizations," one of the most famous theses of the international relations after the Cold War, see Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

[4] Puri, *The Great Imperial Hangover*, p. 296.

the advance of European countries in the Age of Exploration. In other words, the modernisation of the world in itself originated from Europe. This historical development led to the colonial rule in the regions such as Latin America, Asia and Africa, and particularly in the 19th century, the power politics between the European colonial empires more and more intensified. As portrayed by a prominent historian as "the Age of Empire",[5] the imperialism among the European powers in this era symbolised a part of its *Zeitgeist*.

The ensuing 20th century again marked another historical turning-point, particularly after two world wars, under the worldwide circumstance of anti-colonialism. Then occurred were the independence movements in mainly Asia-African regions, many of which resulted in ghastly independence wars and conflicts. These phenomena led to historical upheavals such as the stream of decolonisation, the birth of the 'Third World', and the North-South Problem under the rapid globalisation.

Therefore, as argued by the previously noted scholars, it can be said that the experience of imperial rules and their influences is in deep connection with contemporary issues in many ways.[6] In that sense, findings from the imperial history including not only anti-colonial struggles and independence wars but also imperial legacies and their relations with current circumstances could be accumulated. In reality, however, the imperial history, concerning the British Empire in particular, has not so much been interested in these interrelationships.[7] Discussions on the imperial legacies

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[5] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987).

[6] This consideration partially appears within some introductory texts. See Stephen Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Ashley Jackson, *The British Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Dane Kennedy, *Decolonization: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[7] As for representative contributions on the British imperial history and decolonisation, R.F. Holland, *European Decolonization 1918-1981: An Introductory Survey* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985); John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-war World* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988); John Darwin, *The End of the British Empire: The Historical Debate* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991); D. George Boyce, *Decolonisation and the British Empire, 1775-1997* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999); Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume IV: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation, 1918-1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Wm. Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization* (London: I.B.

has just getting started, since imperial historians have placed a much greater deal of weight on the empirical analyses of colonial rule and decolonisation than suggestions for their impacts on the contemporary world.[8] Especially, in regard to current security issues, there is even poorer contribution from imperial history.[9]

## 2. Decolonisation as the "Master-narrative"?

Of course, it does not mean that there have been no interests at all in the imperial legacies or historic ties between Empires and contemporary world by imperial historians. Some scholars majoring in the imperial history have made introspective criticisms of the above situation. Over a decade ago, for example, one influential imperial historian proclaimed in his review article that the British imperial history was too concentrated on the study of decolonisation and the process of the dissolution of Empire.[10] The problem pointed out was that

[the] focus on decolonisation as the master-narrative of twentieth-century imperial history has blinded us to the continuities in Britain's relations with the world and the many connections between the Britain of 2007 and the Britain of 1967, one of the favoured termination dates for those who seek to chalk an outline around the British empire's final resting place. Imperial historians, beguiled by the apparent finality of the lowering of the Union Flag in distant sunny places and the valedictory sail past

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Tauris, 2006); John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); John Darwin, *Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain* (London: Allen Lane, 2012).

[8] For example, see Sandra Halperin and Ronen Palan (eds.), *Legacies of Empire: Imperial Roots of the Contemporary Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), Part IV.

[9] Understandably, the disclosure of historical documents in archives and libraries has a considerable influence on the research by historians. In the case of the British imperial history, scholars have concentrated more and more on the process of decolonisation after the opening of new materials in past decades. Also see Richard Dunley and Jo Pugh, "Do Archive Catalogues Make History?: Exploring Interactions between Historians and Archives," *Twentieth Century British History*, hwab021 (2021).

[10] Ashley Jackson, "Empire and Beyond: The Pursuit of Overseas National Interests in the Late Twentieth Century," *The English Historical Review*, 123:499 (December 2007), pp. 1350-1366.

of departing ships, have been doing themselves out of a job, earnestly seeking an end of empire rather than making sense of a twentieth century in which empire was just one facet of Britain's unique and constantly evolving interface with the world.[11]

Here, the indifference to the contemporary world after the dismantling of the empire was acutely criticised. Thus, it could be said that the problem surrounding the British imperial history, namely the underestimation of the connection with the modern world, has been at least understood by historians. Still, despite the criticism above, the situation seems hardly changed even today.[12]

As for the British imperial history, this tendency to focus on decolonisation as the "master-narrative" is remarkably typical when historians deal with the symbolic events of the dissolution of the British Empire. The most noticeable example is about the British decision to abandon its military commitment outside Europe in the late 1960s. The Labour government led by the Prime Minister Harold Wilson, after the confused decision-making process, announced in January 1968 that Britain would withdraw forces from 'east of Suez' by the end of 1971, which meant that it would "not be maintaining military bases outside Europe and the Mediterranean."[13] This eventual announcement symbolised the decline of the Britain's world role and had certain impacts not only the British foreign policy but also broader international relations in those days. As a result, many historians have paid much attention to the retreat from 'east of Suez' and their main interest has been the decision-making process toward the determination of the announcement.[14]

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[11] Ibid., p. 1351.

[12] Another scholar also indicates that events in the post-imperial era have received little attention from the British imperial history. Stephen Howe, "Decolonisation and imperial aftershocks: the Thatcher years," in Ben Jackson and Robert Saunders (eds.), *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 234-235.

[13] *Parliamentary Debate [Hansard]*, House of Commons, 5th Series, Volume 756, 16 January 1968, cols. 1580-1581.

[14] There are rich accumulations of research on this topic, including such classic monographs as Phillip Darby, *British Defence Policy East of Suez 1947-1968* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973); Jeffrey Picketing, *Britain's Withdrawal from East of Suez: The Politics of Retrenchment* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1998). As a masterpiece of the theme, see Saki Dockrill, *Britain's Retreat from East of Suez: The Choice between Europe and the World?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). Furthermore, there are many other recent works, for example, P.L. Pham, *Ending 'East of Suez': The British*

However, even if the centre of gravity of British military involvement moved from Empire to Europe, Britain at that time had many dependent territories and overseas military bases around the world. Under the context of the Cold War, Britain's world role, including the maintaining of Empire, was still directly linked to the interests of its allies and local authorities. Most crucially, as is preached down in the above-referenced review article, there is a "common historical misreading of the decolonisation period" among historians, since they "have overlooked the fact that, although close-down east of Suez was *announced*, it was never fully enacted."[15] In fact, even after the 'east of Suez' decision, the British government maintained its option to redeploy armed forces beyond Europe in some time.[16] Thus, the more active studies on the British political and military commitment after the Empire are still much to be desired.

### 3. Britain and Its Imperial Legacies

Based on above-mentioned backgrounds, in the following sections this paper tries to argue some cases of the independence and anti-colonial movements against British Empire, mainly in Southeast Asia, Middle East and Mediterranean, and influences of these movements on events in later years and on contemporary issues. Regarding the independence movements, this paper adopts wider and looser definition of 'war', including such words as 'revolt', 'rebellion', 'insurrection' or 'insurgency', in order to make room for dealing with much more cases below.

Furthermore, on the one hand, for the local people their movements and struggles were justified as legitimate campaigns to gain their self-determination and therefore the expressions of nationalism. On reconsidering the matter from the perspectives of suzerain powers, on the other hand, these movements were nothing but insurgencies or uprisings. For this reason, at the outset leastwise the colonial authorities determined

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*Decision to Withdraw from Malaysia and Singapore 1964-1968* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Edward Hampshire, *From East of Suez to the Eastern Atlantic: British Naval Policy 1964-70* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

[15] Jackson, "Empire and Beyond," p. 1360.

[16] Brief No. 5, "General Capability for Operations outside Europe 1972/73," Five Power Conference on Far East Defence, Briefs for UK Delegation, attached in Minute from Nicholls (Treasury) to Bancroft (Treasury) and McDonnell (Treasury), "Briefs for Five Power Conference on Far East Defence," 29 May 1968, T 225/3408, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, London [hereafter cited as TNA].

to use such measures as counterinsurgency so as to deal with the situation easily and to supress the local actions.[17] However, these coercive measures gradually reached a limit and the suzerain states were forced to change their imperial policy, bringing about the dissolution of the colonial empires in the end. Henceforth, this paper considers the independence 'wars' within much more extended understandings and surviews the selected cases of decolonisation and imperial retreat, focusing upon British Empire and its demise in Eurasian continent.

### (1) Southeast Asia: from Disturbance to Detainment

As a first case, Southeast Asia was a region where Britain experienced harsh insurgencies and anti-colonial struggles after the Second World War. Although other colonial empires, such as French and Dutch, had far more intense experiences of the independence wars,[18] Britain was neither extraneous to the stream of decolonisation in this region. During the Second World War, the British Empire confronted the challenges from axis powers all over the world as well as Great Britain itself, and therefore its imperial defence was of vital importance.[19] In the Far East and Southeast Asia, military bases in Hong Kong and Singapore exemplified the interests of British Empire, but these strategic bases were occupied by Japanese Imperial Army at the beginning of

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[17] There are plentiful works on counterinsurgency. As examples of Britain, see Paul Dixon (ed.), *The British Approach to Counterinsurgency: From Malaya and Northern Ireland to Iraq and Afghanistan* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Aaron Edwards, *Defending the Realm? The Politics of Britain's Small Wars since 1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012); Rory Cormac, *Confronting the Colonies: British Intelligence and Counterinsurgency* (London: Hurst, 2013); John Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[18] On the one hand, France faced many difficulties during First Indochina War from 1946 to 1954, which came down to the independence of Vietnam and became one of the triggers of successive Vietnam War. On the other hand, soon after the Asia-Pacific War was over, Indonesian nationalists started continued fighting against returning Dutch colonial rule and British reinforcements, and finally gained independence from the Netherlands in 1949. Martin Thomas, Bob Moore and L.J. Butler, *Crises of Empire: Decolonization and Europe's Imperial States*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), chaps. 7, 12 and 13.

[19] As for the aspects of British Empire in the Second World War, see Ashley Jackson, "The British Empire, 1939-1945," in Richard Bosworth and Joseph Maiolo (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Second World War, Volume II: Politics and Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 558-580.

the War. Later the British recovered these territories but, for the local people, the colonial rule had become anachronism already. Just after the War, due to the rise of nationalism and anti-colonial sentiment, the law and order in the region deteriorated more and more.[20]

In British Malaya, on which the British direct and indirect influence continued from the 19th century, turned to be the place of disorder in the late 1940s. Although the British were able to reconquer its colony much more easily, due to successive economic and social problems the insurrection by communists erupted in June 1948 and Britain had to declare a state of emergency, which disturbed its intention to develop the region gradually. This situation led Britain to take far severer attitude to suppress the emergency. It is often described that Britain capitulated before the rise of Asian nationalism in the post-war era, but the case of Malaya could undermine this argument and the abandonment of the British rule was out of question at that stage.[21]

Besides, Malaya was strategically vital in the context of the East-West confrontation in Asia. The beginning of the Cold War forced the anti-colonial stance of the United States, the leader of the Western world, to become more and more complex. For Americans, the containment of the Soviet Union and communists' regime was to be by far the biggest object in their foreign policy. Therefore, in such cases as Malaya, where the British colonial rule had useful effects to refuse the communists, the US bolstered up Britain's efforts to maintain its Empire rather actively. This paradoxical "imperialism of decolonization" highlights the course of history in Malaya.[22]

From 1954, however, nationalism in the local authority progressively rose and demands for independence increased in Malaya. As a result, in 1958 the independence of Malayan Federation achieved, but at that time the emergency was not over, continuing for another three years. In addition, Britain concluded a defence treaty with Malaya, which enabled the former to have a big strategic position in Southeast Asia

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[20] *British Documents on the End of Empire* [hereafter cited as *BDEE*], *Series B, Volume 3: Malaya, Part I: The Malayan Union Experiment 1942-1948*, no. 65.

[21] Thomas, Moore and Butler, *Crises of Empire*, pp. 56-57. Also see *BDEE, Series A, Volume 2: The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951, Part I: High Policy and Administration*, no. 72.

[22] Regarding this argument, see Wm. Roger Louis and Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Decolonization," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 22:3 (1994), pp. 462-511.

continuously.[23] Nevertheless, this did not mean the completion of the decolonisation in the region. At first, Britain intended to "bring Malaya, Singapore and the Borneo territories into closer association," but the merger of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei in 1961, despite the British enthusiastic response, turned out to be a failure. The creation of Malaysia in 1963 brought about the Brunei's decision to opt out and Singapore's secession in 1965.[24] Britain had to back the new association with its continuing military commitment, mainly because of the escalated tensions between Malaysia and Indonesia, namely *Konfrontasi*, from 1963 to 1966.

*Konfrontasi* was finally solved in 1966, which meant for Britain that its enormous burden for the defence of Malaysia and Singapore would also be reduced remarkably. In this sense, a series of events were the turning-point of the British policy in Southeast Asia.[25] Thereafter, Britain accelerated the force reduction in the region, which led to the 'east of Suez' decision in January 1968. However, this did not bring about directly the demise of British military commitment, because the local governments still needed political, economic and security support from Britain.[26] At the height of the Vietnam War, other regional powers, such as the United States, Australia and New Zealand, also hoped for Britain's continuous military contribution.[27] Consequently, the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement (AMDA), which originated in Malaya's independence, was to be reorganised to the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) in April 1971 and the British politico-military commitment on Southeast Asia, although weakened, remained a foundation of the regional security and formed a legacy of the British imperial rule.[28]

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[23] Thomas, Moore and Butler, *Crises of Empire*, pp. 74-75.

[24] *BDEE, Series B, Volume 8: Malaysia*, nos. 194, 199; *BDEE, Series A, Volume 5: East of Suez and the Commonwealth 1964-1971, Part I: East of Suez*, no. 98.

[25] Minute, "British Policy in East Asia," Unnamed and Undated, FCO 15/4, TNA. See also Sue Thompson, ""The Greatest Success of British Diplomacy in East Asia in Recent Years"? British Diplomacy and the Ending of Confrontation, 1965-1966," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 25:2 (2014), pp. 285-302.

[26] CC (68) 26th Conclusions, 9 April 1968, CAB 128/43, TNA; Message from Tunku Abdul Rahman (Prime Minister of Malaysia) to Wilson (Prime Minister of the United Kingdom), 14 June 1968, T 225/3409, TNA.

[27] Regarding backgrounds of this issue, see such as Jeremy Fielding, "Coping with Decline: US Policy toward the British Defense Reviews of 1966," *Diplomatic History*, 23:4 (October 1999), pp. 633-656.

[28] On FPDA, Andrea Benvenuti, "The Heath Government and British Defence Policy in Southeast Asia at the End of Empire (1970-71)," *Twentieth Century British History*,

In Brunei, Britain's continuing influence was much more typical. When Brunei, as a British protectorate, became a self-governing state in 1959, the latter had its responsibility for the foreign and defence affairs. Afterwards, the independence movement intensified in Brunei as well and a revolt erupted in 1962, only to be suppressed instantly. The insurrection, however, had broader impacts on British policy towards Southeast Asia, since the revolt was not only a reason why Brunei decided not to join Malaysia but also a part of the first stage of *Konfrontasi*.[29] Later then, in 1971 the renewed agreement provided Brunei with full self-government, while its foreign and defence policy were still shared with Britain. As regards the British military commitment, including Gurkha units stationed there, Brunei bore all costs, hoping strongly for them to continue stationing.[30]

Moreover, in the late 1970s, Britain tried to find a way to the complete withdrawal from Brunei, but as a result of sequential negotiation, the British forces had to agree to keep stationed in Brunei until 1983. At that time, it was Britain that feared the international criticism of the remaining colonial rule, but Brunei kept insisting on its strong demands for the British continuous presence. Accordingly, Britain again forced to retain its military commitment there, even after Brunei gained independence in 1984. In this sense, Brunei has presented us the very exceptional case of decolonisation and the end of British Empire in Southeast Asia.[31] Above all, the British army in Brunei, centred on a light infantry battalion of Royal Gurkha Rifles, have played an important role of its defence.[32]

### (2) Middle East and Mediterranean: Unintended Retention?

In the Middle East, the impact of the dissolution of British Empire was much bigger than Southeast Asia. It is well known that historically Britain had wielded its power as

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20:1 (January 2009), pp. 53-73; Daniel Wei Boon Chua, "America's Role in the Five Power Defence Arrangements: Anglo-American Power Transition in South-East Asia, 1967-1971," *The International History Review*, 39:4 (2017), pp. 615-637.

[29] Details of the revolt can be seen in *BDEE, Series B, Volume 8*, Appendix, Section XV.

[30] *BDEE, Series A, Volume 5, Part I*, no. 113.

[31] Masao Shinozaki, *Empire Detained: Britain's Commitment outside Europe in Post-War British External Policy, 1968-1982* (Tokyo: Yoshida Publishing, 2019), pp. 133-136. See also *BDEE, Series A, Volume 5, Part I*, p. lv.

[32] See the British Army Homepage, "Brunei," <https://www.army.mod.uk/deployments/brunei/> [accessed on 13 August 2021].

the 'Informal Empire' all over the world,[33] including the Middle East. However, in common with other areas, the British political and military influence in the Middle East drastically declined after the Second World War. The prolonged Israel-Palestine Conflict originated from Britain's failure to manage the local order in its imperial context, and the rise of Arab Nationalism led to the Suez crisis in 1956 which symbolised the fall of British imperialism in the region.[34] Therefore, it might be anticipated that Britain would abandon its prestigious position in the Middle East sooner or later, although the local order was not ready for this situation at that time.

When the British government expressed its plan to withdraw from 'east of Suez' in January 1968, the protectorates in the Persian Gulf, for example, were suddenly forced to be to stand on their own feet by 1971. At first, the 'perception gap' between the British and local emirates brought about serious confusion and distrust.[35] But, once it became clear that Britain should no longer maintain its military commitment in the Middle East, the emirates quickly began seeking their way of survival, which in turn led to the foundation of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).[36] Thereafter, though the British political and economic relations with the region were maintained, its influence over such issues as military affairs diminished more and more. The transformation of the regional order would be not until the beginning of the direct commitment by the United States in the end of the 1970s.[37]

On the other hand, the Mediterranean remained one of the key points of Britain's military commitment in the post-imperial era. During the early years of the Cold War, the region was regarded as a hotspot of the East-West confrontation,[38] and the British

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[33] John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 6:1 (1953), pp. 1-15; P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: 1688-2015*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2016).

[34] As a classic monograph, Keith Kyle, *Suez* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1991). See also Simon C. Smith (ed.), *Reassessing Suez 1956: New Perspectives on the Crisis and its Aftermath* (London: Routledge, 2008).

[35] *BDEE, Series A, Volume 5, Part I*, no. 119.

[36] Shohei Sato, *Britain and the Formation of the Gulf States: Embers of Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

[37] Simon C. Smith, "Power Transferred? Britain, the United States, and the Gulf, 1956-71," *Contemporary British History*, 21:1 (2007), p. 15.

[38] Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 121-127, 142-146; Svetozar Rajak, "The Cold War in the Balkans, 1945-1956," in Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume I:*

contribution to the security of the Mediterranean was also indispensable for Western allies, especially North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Besides, in the history of British Empire, the region constituted of the important position leading to India, Britain's largest colony, and the 'Empire Route' symbolised the British naval mastery in the late 19th and first half of the 20th centuries.[39]

The stream of decolonisation, however, spread over the Mediterranean as well in the post-war world and forced Britain to deal with anti-colonial movements and insurgencies in the area severely. In Cyprus, for instance, the British authority had faced many difficulties with successive anti-imperial and independence struggle since the 1930s, and in the 1950s for Britain the situation worsened more and more. The revolt in the island caused much severer reactions by the British and brought about an infamous example of counterinsurgency,[40] exacerbating at the same time a serious ethnic conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Finally, as a result of compromises between each side, Cyprus gained independence as a sovereign state in 1960, but the dispute was never settled. Britain continued to bear its responsibility for the territorial integrity of the island as a guarantor together with Greece and Turkey.[41]

After the independence of Cyprus, the British political and military influence in the Mediterranean grew weaker and weaker. The Royal Navy's Mediterranean Fleet, which had been based in Malta and regarded as a long-time symbol of Britain's naval hegemony in the region, was dismantled in June 1967.[42] In Malta erupted fierce anti-British and anti-colonial movements as well, coming down to the independence in 1964

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*Origins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 203-208.

[39] Robert Holland, *Blue-Water Empire: The British in the Mediterranean since 1800* (London: Allen Lane, 2012). As for the historical overview of Britain's naval supremacy, see Jeremy Black, *The British Seaborne Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London: Penguin, 2017).

[40] Cypriot independence struggle and British counterinsurgency have gained much interest among historians. See such as Robert Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus, 1954-1959* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); David French, *Fighting EOKA: The British Counter-Insurgency Campaign on Cyprus, 1955-1959* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[41] Parliamentary Command Paper, Cmnd. 1253, *Cyprus Treaty of Guarantee*, 16 August 1960. The treaty is still valid today.

[42] On this, Nobuyoshi Ito, "Britain and the Dissolution of the Mediterranean Fleet: Convergence of the End of Empire and Alliance Management," *Briefing Memo*, National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS), January 2021.

and later in the 1970s the Maltese government claimed for the complete withdrawal of the British forces. After a series of depressing negotiation, in 1972 Britain and its NATO allies had to admit that all forces stationing in Malta should be withdrawn within 7 years, which meant that the British military presence there would vanish in the near future.[43]

Despite this tendency, remnants of the British imperial rule persisted in Cyprus as the Sovereign Basa Areas (SBA) of Akrotiri and Dhekelia.[44] While there had been suspicions and controversies constantly over the usefulness and capability of the bases,[45] two SBAs still embodied Britain's military presence in the eastern Mediterranean and its allies, especially the United States, made much account of the British continuing commitments through its military bases in the region. Although SBAs were assigned mainly to another alliance, Central Treaty Organization (CENTO),[46] their importance to NATO seemed clear as well. Therefore, in the mid-1970s, when the British government sought to abandon SBAs with the Cyprus conflict getting worse, the United States and NATO allies asserted enthusiastically that Britain should keep its military commitment in the island not only in the context of the Cold War but also from the perspective of conflict resolution.[47] Thus, under those pressures

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[43] *BDEE, Series B, Volume 11: Malta*, pp. lvi-lxxii. Also see Simon C. Smith, "Conflict and Co-operation: Dom Mintoff, Giorgio Borg Olivier and the End of Empire in Malta," *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 17:1 (2007), pp. 115-134; Simon C. Smith, "Dependence and Independence: Malta and the End of Empire," *Journal of Maltese History*, 1:1 (2008), pp. 33-47.

[44] Regarding the brief history of the SBAs, Costas M. Constantinou and Oliver P. Richmond, "The Long Mile of Empire: Power, Legitimation and the UK Bases in Cyprus," *Mediterranean Politics*, 10:1 (March 2005), pp. 65-84; Klearchos A. Kyriakides, "The Sovereign Base Areas and British Defence Policy Since 1960," in Hubert Faustmann and Nicos Peristianis (eds.), *Britain in Cyprus: Colonialism and Post-Colonialism 1878-2006* (Möhnesee-Wamel: Bibliopolis, 2006), pp. 511-534; Andreas Constandinos, "Britain, America and the Sovereign Base Areas from 1960-1978," *The Cyprus Review*, 21:2 (Fall 2009), pp. 13-36; Andreas Stergiou, "The Exceptional Case of the British Military Bases on Cyprus," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 51:2 (2015), pp. 285-300; Richard Clogg, "The Sovereign Base Areas: colonialism redivivus?," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 39:1 (2015), pp. 138-150.

[45] Evanthis Hatzivassiliou, "Cold War Pressures, Regional Strategies, and Relative Decline: British Military and Strategic Planning for Cyprus, 1950-1960," *The Journal of Military History*, 73:4 (October 2009), pp. 1143-1166.

[46] Panagiotis Dimitrakis, *Failed Alliances of the Cold War: Britain's Strategy and Ambitions in Asia and the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), chaps. 3, 6.

[47] Letter from Kissinger (United States Secretary of State) to Callaghan (Secretary of

Britain had to retract its initial decision to withdraw all forces from SBAs and reluctantly admitted that it would continue to retain its military presence in Cyprus.[48]

In this manner, the British military commitment in the Mediterranean was partly maintained. For Britain, this result was rather unintended and unexpected one, but it accidentally enabled Britain to maintain its capability to pursue military operations outside Europe. After the end of the Cold War, for instance, Britain had many occasions to have joint military missions with the United States in the Middle East, such as the Gulf War and Iraq War. Besides, the SBAs were to be regarded as the remains of the imperial past but played an important and unexpected role for Britain, since Akrotiri was used as a frontline base of the air operation against Islamic State (IS) in 2011.[49] Therefore, the legacies of British Empire and its continuous politico-military role, though indirectly and partially, have had non-negligible influence on the broader regional order today.

## Conclusion

This paper has tried to reconsider the importance of imperial legacies, mainly of British Empire, in the contemporary world. For Britain, the retention of forces outside Europe did not reflect its intension in the era of decolonisation, while this half-hearted presence had much impact on subsequent developments. From the geopolitical point of view, the politico-military legacies of British Empire have been always one of the key elements in considering the international order. The imperial history of the 20th century, which has concentrated its focal point on decolonisation itself too much and has regarded this as a 'maser-narrative', cannot always shed light on the broader implication of the end of colonial Empires. Thus, from the perspective of imperial history as well, more research and analyses on the interrelations between the process of

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State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs), 16 November 1974, PREM 16/21, TNA.
[48] Message from Wilson to Ford (President of the United States), 20 November 1974, PREM 16/29, TNA; Ref. A08279, Minute from Hunt (Secretary of the Cabinet) to Arthur (Deputy Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office), "Defence Review - Cyprus," 21 November 1974, DEFE 13/973, TNA; *Documents on the British Policy Overseas, Series III, Volume V: The Southern Flank in Crisis, 1973-1976*, no. 101.
[49] "UK launches first drone strike in Iraq against Isis militants; RAF Reaper drone fires Hellfire missile at Islamic State forces near site of Iraq's biggest oil refinery north of Baghdad," *The Guardian*, 10 November 2014.

decolonisation or independence movements and contemporary issues are required.

Of course, the examples referred to within this paper are just single parts and a large number of other phenomena should be taken up as well. Comparative viewpoints among the cases within an empire may also be essential to the development of the accumulation of knowledge in the imperial history. For example, Britain experienced its decline from the dominant position in Africa, which this paper cannot cover. Besides, the comparison between colonial empires will give great result in the history of decolonisation. France, for instance, suffered from the independence wars not only in Indochina but also in Algeria in the 1950s and 1960s, on which successive British governments keep a very close watch in the same period.[50] These comparative sights above will contribute to the future arguments more and more.

The central focus on the British imperial retreat, its reaction to the independence movement and the measures to deal with the independence wars or 'insurgencies' is still stronger than their historical implication to the contemporary phenomena. Nevertheless, the continuity between past events and today's situation would be worth considering as well, especially in the context of the fluidised world order nowadays and the consistent pursuit of national interests overseas by each country.[51] The experiences of the British and other colonial empires in the late 20th century will give us rich suggestion to their past, present and future.

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[50] Martin Thomas, "The Dilemmas of an Ally of France: Britain's Policy towards the Algerian Rebellion, 1954-62," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 23:1 (1995), pp. 129-154; Martin Thomas, "The British Government and the End of French Algeria, 1958-62," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 25:2 (2002), pp. 172-198; Christopher Goldsmith, "The British Embassy in Paris and the Algerian War: An Uncomfortable Partner?," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 25:2 (2002), pp. 159-171.
[51] Today, for example, Britain's recurrence of the interest in the Asia-Pacific, including Southeast Asia, can be understood within this context. See Ryosuke Tanaka, "The UK's Military Commitment to the Indo-Pacific," *Briefing Memo*, NIDS, March 2020.