Eastern Frontier Essay, Research Paper

?

Luttwak suggests grand

strategy? – military installations

result grand planning and second from Diocletian onwards defence in depth with

mobile field army units. ?

Careful imperial

announcements ? gap between alleged motivation and practice – stated aims and

actual practice ? studies show claims of huge defensive system wrong.? Could they have carried out the work?? ?

Trajan?s Persian war

106 ? marked ?beginning of an obsession??

3r century faced with Sasanian strong military force. ?Shapur and Chosros I and II damaging

invasions ?

Natural to think

military installation were defensive against Persians and Tribes, but most of

period neither empires seriously thought of trying to defeat the other or

occupy territory ? system far more concerned with internal security, prestige

and policing border areas.? Legionary

fortresses housed much smaller units ? Roman Persian warfare more to do with

sieges of towns than fortles, soldiers may have been staying in the towns

anyway. ?

Equal power, aggressive,

ruthless and capable – helplessness Eastern cities when faced army Chosroes I

and financial cost to empire ? peace treaty 562 ? Justinian?s successors still

engaged with problem of war ? reforms of Chosroes I led to strengthening

military aristocracy ?

Chosroes II despite

owing place to Maurice ? signs of Christian attachment, ruthless as CI. ?

Roman conquest out of

question bur in early 7th century Persians depart from this attitude

? near fatal blows to Roman cities in Asia Minor ? stimulated flight among

Christians.? Ruled for 15 years in

Byzantine East, yes through proxy but combo of this and decades of warfare

played a large role in explaining the ease of Islamic conquests. ?

Question of defence

system at all, many may have been there on an ad hoc basis and may not have

housed garrisons. ?

Conspicuous element

was Rome?s dealing with Arab tribes 4th century onwards both used as

military allies.? From 328 inscription

at Namara ?partial acculturation of Arab tribes and rulers living along the

edge of areas of Graeco Roman settlement? ?

Both empires relied

heavily on their tribal clientele – even fought whole battles for them.? Phylarchs increasingly important role in

security of border lands ? paid to d ? federates suspected of helping them when

moved north. ? old policy of clientage at expense of Roman army ? similar

policy to those employed earlier in the west ? could rebound to government?s

disadvantage.? Not even consistent ?

Justinian gave al-Harith titles of phylarch, patrician, and king to

counterbalance Lakhmids ? Justin II cut off subsidies and turned against

Mundhir son of al-Hairth 0 leaves Dara ad Apamea undefended. ?

Sparsity of Byzantine

forces at time of invasion ? linked to Justinian?s problems of manpower and

finance in west ? reliance on Arab federates, effects intensified 6th

century.? Limitanei not being paid,

records chaos and evidence withdrawal of troops from SE Palestine ? weakening

resistance to Islamic groups ? this with effects 7th century Persian

invasion explains surrender Udruh and Aila and opening up of route north ?

fateful consequences,? Heraclius

problems in recruiting and supplying adequate army against Persians suggest

military weakness a reality by 7th century. ?

Eastern provinces in 7th

century shared with West external threats and internal fragmentation: changes

in settlement, Christianisation, impact of military and fiscal needs all

evident before Persian invasion and arrival of Muhammed.? When Muslims left Arabia and encountered

Roman troops in Palestine and Syria found Roman Near East in ferment of change.