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*Note du chef de la Direction européenne  
pour le sous-secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures*

*Memorandum from Head, European Division,  
to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs*

CONFIDENTIAL

[Ottawa], March 14, 1956

## THE MIDDLE EAST

I had been in the process of jotting down a few ideas on this subject when I received a copy of Mr. Holmes' memorandum on Western Policy in the Middle East. Instead of trying to comment on this directly I thought it would be better simply to finish my paper, even though it has been to a certain extent over-taken by events. In any event I am in general agreement with Mr. Holmes' thesis and the comments† thereon of Mr. Ignatieff.

2. The main points in my paper are:

(a) The Arab-Israeli quarrel is simply the most acute manifestation of the general problem of the evolution of the Arab world from colonial status;

(b) No progress can be made on the main problem until we solve the Palestine question;

(c) The Russians now hold the key and the only way to reach a solution is by trying to reach Four-Power agreement. The only time in the past ten years that any progress was possible in Palestine was during the brief period of Four-Power co-operation on this subject in 1947-48;

(d) The main lines of a settlement, which have already been laid down in essence by both Washington and London might also include the establishment of a free territory of Aqaba under U.N. supervision.

R.A.D. F[ORD]

[PIÈCE JOINTE/ENCLOSURE]

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1. The purpose of this study is to examine the basis for the oft-repeated claim that the Middle East has become in the last few months the most inflammable part of the world, to outline Canadian interest in the problem, and to make a few suggestions for trying to meet the situation.

2. There are a number of factors which make the problems of the Middle East particularly complex and difficult:

(a) The anti-Western, anti-colonial feeling in nearly all the countries of this area;

(b) The Arab-Israeli impasse;

(c) The economic and political backwardness of the region;

(d) The vulnerability of the area to Soviet political and economic penetration; and

(e) Its strategic importance.