

thanked Mr. Comay for showing him, on a personal and confidential basis, the exchanges which had taken place between the Israeli and United States Governments.

3.

DEA/50134-40

*Note du sous-secrétaire d'État adjoint aux Affaires extérieures  
pour le sous-secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures<sup>7</sup>*

*Memorandum from Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs  
to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs<sup>7</sup>*

CONFIDENTIAL

[Ottawa], March 8, 1956

## WESTERN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The situation in the Middle East is deteriorating at a dangerous rate, and as the present policies of the United Kingdom and the United States seem to be producing most unsatisfactory results it may be time to consider urgently desperate remedies. Is it perhaps time, therefore, for the United States, the United Kingdom, and France to consider inviting the Russians to sit down and reach agreement on a settlement of the Arab-Israeli question and possibly also broader questions of Middle Eastern policy? This was Sir Anthony Eden's initial view of how to handle the problem of Communist arms shipments, but it was not received at all well by the Americans, — and one might presume that it was also discouraged by those elements in the Foreign Office who dislike instinctively untraditional proposals, especially when they concern the Middle East.

2. There are obviously objections to such a proposal, even if the Americans could be persuaded to agree to it. The Russians might well be expected to exploit such an opportunity for negotiation unscrupulously on their own behalf, and cannot, of course, be relied upon to keep an agreement in good faith. It might be, furthermore, that to recognize their interests in the Middle East as legitimate would give them the respectability in that area they have been seeking. From the Canadian point of view, one of the main objections would be in principle to Great Power negotiation outside the United Nations — particularly when we have not the excuse which we have in the Far Eastern situation of the temporary necessity of including Peking. All these objections are valid, but it must be recalled that the alternative of non-cooperation with the Russians is proving bankrupt and just possibly leading to disaster. It is a question of which course has more dangers and disadvantages, not of which course is perfect. As our Anglo-American betters are now telling us, we live in a grey world.

3. It has been customary to dismiss any such suggestion by pointing out that it would open the door to Soviet infiltration in the Middle East. This argument seems hardly valid when the Soviet agents are already coming and there seems to be nothing to stop their arriving in large numbers everywhere from Syria to Liberia. We can't stop the Russians from taking a direct and active interest in the Middle East but it is conceivable that if their interests in the Middle East and Africa were to be placed within a framework of international understanding, or at least a bargain which they would have an interest in keeping, it might be less nefarious.

<sup>7</sup> Note marginale :/Marginal note:

M. Holmes Je suis toujours surpris que vous trouvez le temps de penser ... et si clairement. Merci.  
J.L.[éger].