

to destroy the Baghdad Pact and secure a voice in Middle East affairs, though naturally these must also be important Soviet aims.

R.A.D. F[ORD]

7. DEA/50134-40

*Note du sous-secrétaire d'État adjoint aux Affaires extérieures
pour le sous-secrétaire d'État par intérim aux Affaires extérieures*
*Memorandum from Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs
to Acting Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs*

CONFIDENTIAL

[Ottawa], May 15, 1956

INTERVIEW WITH AMBASSADOR OF EGYPT

In accordance with Mr. Pearson's request, I asked the Egyptian Ambassador to call this afternoon. It had been impossible to get anyone at the Egyptian Embassy for several days as they were celebrating the end of Ramadan.

2. When the Ambassador came I told him that the propaganda material which had been enclosed with Mr. Comay's letter[†] to the Minister of May 7, had been drawn to the Minister's attention but I did not mention by whom. I said that Mr. Pearson agreed that this material contained attacks on a friendly nation which went beyond the bounds of what seemed acceptable. I suggested that it seemed to me of a defamatory kind which if it had been published by someone other than a diplomatic source might have required some action. After having consulted Mr. Wershof on this subject, I was careful not to say specifically that it would be actionable. My personal view, I added, was that I did not think it was really of a kind best calculated to appeal to the Canadian public. I said that Mr. Pearson had not wanted to make a formal complaint but had asked me to draw this matter to the attention of the Ambassador.

3. The Ambassador took this pretty well. He contended himself with emphasizing that it was all factual, that this was what the Israelis were doing to Egyptians and these were actual photographs. He was inclined to get the impression that we were attempting to prevent the Arab countries from presenting their side of the question but I assured him very firmly several times that we had no such intention. He had every right to explain the Egyptian position to the Canadian population in the same way as the Israeli Embassy had the right to explain their position. It was merely a question of how far one should go in attacking another government. He said that not only the Israeli Embassy but many Canadians viciously attacked Egypt and Arab policy and referred to conventions which he said were frequently held in the Chateau Laurier where people said dreadful things about Egypt. I said that Mr. Pearson would take exactly the same attitude towards similar material put out by any other Embassy. Mr. El Khatib did not promise to withdraw any of the material or to cease putting it out and I did not press him to any commitment. However, I think that he will take the hint. In spite of his protests, the discussion was pretty amicable in tone.

4. After this unpleasant introduction, the Ambassador asked me if any decision had been taken on the planes for Israel.¹¹ I told him that no decision had been taken but that the matter was constantly under consideration. He gave me the usual arguments about the desirability of Canada preserving its neutrality and its high reputation among Arab coun-

¹¹ Voir/See Document 40.