

three powers presently have military forces this area (counting United States Sixth Fleet). Such interim approach would, I believe, satisfy Turkish anxiety take affirmative steps, while avoiding danger negative Arab reaction during present very fluid period.

This connection, in my final substantive meeting with Foreign Minister June 17 latter indicated in passing that he personally favored covert approach to Middle East military planning at present time. He did not, however, indicate any official change in Turkish position as stated in note transmitted Embassy Despatch 791. This remark could have meant official Turkish position, which was first announced by Prime Minister during his visit with Foreign Minister to London last fall, derives from Prime Minister personally and views, being similar to those of British, may be ones which British persuaded him to adopt during his visit.

McGHEE

No. 142

780.5/6-2653

*The Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson)*¹

SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] June 26, 1953.

MY DEAR MR. SECRETARY: In a memorandum of June 25 [24], 1952, forwarded to this Department with the concurrence of the Acting Secretary of Defense on June 28, 1952,² the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated, "The importance of the Middle East area is such that planning arrangements should proceed regardless of whether the Arab states elect to participate at this time in the Middle East Defense Organization". Since that date, the United States Government in developing plans for the Middle East has operated on the tacit assumption that Arab cooperation would be won and a MEDO established in the near future.

The Department of State is now convinced that it would be unrealistic to continue to operate on this assumption, and that our plans should be adjusted to take account of the improbability of effecting the creation of a Middle East defense arrangement including the Arab states until there has been a significant improvement in the political atmosphere of the region.

¹ Drafted by Daspit and cleared by S/S, S/P, EUR, G, NE, and GTI. Attached to a memorandum from Jernegan to the Secretary of State through Matthews, dated June 17, suggesting that he sign the attached letter requesting the views of the Secretary of Defense as to the desirability of proceeding with planning arrangements for the Middle East which would include only the Western powers. (780.5/6-1753)

² Not printed, but see footnote 2, Document 80.