

No. 915

Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation, lot 64 D 199

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State
for European Affairs (Merchant)*

SECRET

WASHINGTON, November 5, 1954.

Subject: Middle East

Participants: The Secretary
The British Ambassador
Sir Robert Scott
Livingston T. Merchant

In connection with a call on the Secretary on another matter, the British Ambassador said that Sir Anthony Eden was anxious that the Secretary should know of his growing concern over the situation in the Middle East. Sir Anthony is searching for some plan for reconciliation and in this connection has reverted to an earlier thought he had mentioned to the Secretary which would be to attempt for the improvement of Arab-Israeli relations an exercise along the lines which worked successfully in the case of Trieste.

Sir Roger said that Shuckburgh, an Assistant Under Secretary for Middle Eastern Affairs, is now touring the area in search of ideas and Sir Anthony hoped that when Shuckburgh returned to London, the Secretary would send someone over from Washington to talk the situation over. (At this point the Ambassador gave the Secretary the attached *aide-mémoire*¹ elaborating on this idea.)

The Secretary said that he welcomed these views of Sir Anthony, and that he too was most anxious to tackle this problem of the Middle East which deeply concerned him. With the Egyptian matter now settled² it seemed we were in a position to move. Exactly by what measure he was not sure; possibly something might be done by water development in the area. He thought that it might take one or two years to arrive at a comprehensive solution and that it might be desirable to find someone on our side who would devote his entire time to this particular problem. In any event, he generally shared Sir Anthony's view that we should move without further loss of time. In conclusion the Secretary said that we would consider further the general approach suggested by Sir Anthony. (At this point the Ambassador gave the Secretary the at-

¹ Not attached to the source text. For text, see *infra*.

² The reference is to the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement Regarding the Suez Canal Base, which was signed at Cairo on October 19, 1954. For text, see 210 UNTS 3.