Handwritten Foreign Office minute by P. Dixon[[1]](#footnote-1) on British policy in the Middle East, 10 January 1947

Top Secret

Confidential

Middle East

The Prime Minister discussed the Middle East at 5pm on January 9 with the Foreign Secretary and the Minister of Defence. The papers before the meeting were

1. The P.M.s minute to the Foreign Secretary M 15/47 of Jan 5;
2. The Foreign Secretary’s minute and reply dated January 9; - PM/47/8 [[2]](#footnote-2)
3. General Hollis’[[3]](#footnote-3) minute to the Foreign Secretary of Jan.8 and the two memos annexed.

No officials were present and no minutes were taken, but the S. of S. has told me in confidence that the conclusions of the meeting may be summarised as follows:

1. The general policy as set out in section I of the Foreign Secretary’s minute of Jan. 9 will continue to be followed;
2. There will be no withdrawals of British forces from the M.E. in excess of the programmes already contemplated;
3. Our policy regarding oil should be reviewed, with particular reference to the building up of underground stocks of crude oil in this country.

The Minister of Defence[[4]](#footnote-4) was asked to review the position in consultation with the Oil Committee.

1. The P.M. was however still not satisfied that our overall defence plans required continuance of our present policy in the Middle East, and it was agreed that the discussion would be continued, with the Chief of Staff Present[[5]](#footnote-5).

Dixon.

[TNA, FO 800/476]

Keywords: post-war Middle East

1. Dixon, Pierson (1904-1965), Principal Private Secretary to the Foreign Secretary (1943-1947). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See memorandum from E. Bevin, Foreign Secretary, to C. Attlee, Prime Minister, concerning British policy in the Middle East, 9 January 1947. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Hollis, Sir Leslie Chasemore (1897–1963) - General. Senior Assistant Secretary in the War Cabinet Office (1939 - 1945), Deputy Secretary (Military) to the Cabinet (1947 - 1952), Commander-in-chief of the Royal Marines (1949–1952). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Alexander, Albert Victor, 1st Earl Alexander of Hillsborough (1885-1965) - First Lord of the Admiralty (1921–1931, 1940–1946), Defence Minister (1946–1950), Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1950–1951), Leader of the Labour Party (1955–1964). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Bernard Montgomery. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)