

Bevin, Douglas Confer on End Of Divergencies on Palestine

By CLIFTON DANIEL

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LONDON, May 22—Against a background of reports from the United States that Anglo-American relations were undergoing their severest strain since the end of the war, Foreign Secretary

Bevin today invited United States Ambassador Lewis W. Douglas to discuss the divergencies between their policies on Palestine. They talked for about an hour at the Foreign Office.

No details of the conversation were disclosed officially, but there was apparent in Whitehall a feeling that it might be disastrous for the United States and Britain to become involved in a public squabble at this tense moment in world affairs.

Britons are concerned both for this country's benefits from the European Recovery Program, which are imperiled by the hostility of some United States Senators, and for the broader aspects of Anglo-American collaboration.

They also are anxious about the security of the Middle East, which serves as an oil-supply area, communications bridge and military bulwark against the Soviet Union for both the United States and Britain.

British sources suggested that Mr. Bevin probably told Mr. Douglas that closer cooperation between Britain and the United States might have produced a truce in Palestine. He reportedly expressed the belief that at one time the Arabs inclined toward a truce, but shied away upon the an-

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nouncement of United States recognition of the state of Israel, which was regarded here as hasty and untimely.

Secretary Bevin is understood to believe that a common Anglo-American policy still might produce a cease-fire. In any case, he wants the United States and Britain to keep in step and consult each other fully at all times.

It also was assumed in diplomatic quarters that Mr. Bevin undertook to explain Britain's attitude toward the Palestine fighting. This attitude is that Britain cannot justifiably cease supplying arms, money and men to the Arab states with which she has treaty obligations until the United Nations decides that those states are acting illegally in invading Palestine.

This legalistic approach obviously has not convinced the critics of Britain in the United States, and one result of this policy has been the air battle between Royal Air Force Spitfires and identical planes that Britain had sold to Egypt and taught Egyptians to fly.

A Foreign Office spokesman asserted today that the RAF had acted only in self-defense at Ramat David after the Egyptians had made "repeated attacks" on the British airfield.

"We very much regret the incident," the spokesman said, "but we must emphasize that the airfield is well within the twenty-mile radius which we laid down as being our evacuation area."

Upon surrendering the mandate for Palestine on May 15, Britain abandoned responsibility for the security of Palestine as a whole but, while not opposing the entry of Arab armies, gave all belligerents to understand that British forces would resist any encroachment upon their evacuation zone.

Until today no such trespass had been reported, and clashes between British and Arab armies had been avoided. There was no reason to think the Egyptian attack at

Ramat David was anything but a mistake.

There were no immediate political repercussions from the air clash, but Whitehall was apprehensive because Anglo-Egyptian relations already were extremely touchy and Egyptian public opinion always has been excitable.

The Foreign Office pointedly declined comment today on the proposal of Senator Owen Brewster, Republican, of Maine, for an investigation of whether United States funds were being used by Britain to subsidize Arab states armies, but the Whitehall spokesman observed:

"The support for our allies in the Middle East dates back a long way before the receipt of any loans from the United States."

Assistance under the Marshall Plan, of course, has not yet begun to arrive in this country. Britain's treaty with Iraq dates from 1931, that with Egypt from 1936 and the one with Trans-Jordan from 1946—it was revised and renewed this year.