

'48 State Dept. Role On Mideast Faulted

By William Chapman
Washington Post Staff Writer

High State Department officials repeatedly attempted to undermine President Truman's policy on the Middle East in an effort to block the partitioning of Palestine and the creation of the state of Israel, one of Truman's top advisers charged yesterday.

Clark M. Clifford, now a Washington lawyer, reopened a 28-year-old internal argument in a speech alleging that the State Department disobeyed White House instructions in an attempt to avert the partitioning that led to the Jewish state.

According to Clifford, Truman once said the State Department's behavior countermanded his express promises to support partitioning of Palestine. "They have made me out a liar and a double-crosser," Clifford quotes Truman as having said. "We are sunk."

Clifford delivered his version of events in 1948 in a paper at the annual meeting here of the American Historical Association. He described it as in part a response to some "revisionist historians" who have charged that Truman catered to American Jewish interests as a political ploy in the presidential election of 1948.

"President Truman was deeply incensed at what he considered to be the consistent attitude of obstructionism on the part of the State Department to his policy toward Palestine," Clifford said. "He was angered even more at the innuendos and ultimately the specific charge by the department that the only reason for the President's position was his effort to curry favor with the Jewish vote in this country."

At one point, the State Department, without Truman's knowledge, attempted to revise a partitioning plan

being considered in a United Nations committee by eliminating the Negev Desert from the Jewish section. Truman found out about it, and countermanded it, only after being privately advised by a Zionist leader, Chaim Weizmann, Clifford said.

To discourage U.S. support for the Jewish case, Clifford added, some State Department officials circulated claims that Jews in Palestine were Communist agents. He quoted a memo from one State Department official who argued that "Jewish immigration may be used by the U.S.S.R. as a means of establishing a Communist state at the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean."

Clifford said the "unproved warning" was intended to justify a continued British blockade against Jewish immigrants hoping to settle in Palestine at a time when Truman was attempting to open up one port to Jewish immigrants.

In March, 1948, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Warren Austin recommended in a Security Council speech that talks on a partitioned Palestine be suspended and that the United Nations consider a trusteeship proposal instead. This contradicted Truman's espousal of partitioning, Clifford said. He said that Austin's speech had been drafted within the State Department's Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs.

"To this day, I remember the bewilderment and consternation that were evoked by the trusteeship speech," Clifford said. "The President instructed me to 'find out how this could have happened.' As he said: 'I assured Chaim Weizmann that we

Fraud Center Is Identified

Fort Lauderdale is the Southern city cited in a federal report on organized crime as being the "center for financial fraud for the entire nation," according to Aaron M. Kohn, managing director of the Metropolitan Crime Commission of New Orleans.

The Southern city was not otherwise identified in the report, released last week, of the National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Task Force on Organized Crime, of which Kohn is a member.

Alluding to the city, the report, funded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, said, "There, organized crime figures are believed to have influence over the banking industry, grand juries, and some members of the legal profession."

The report attributes the allegations to law enforcement officials who are not identified.

were for partition and would stick to it. He must think I am a plain liar."

Clifford said he discovered that both Secretary of State George C. Marshall and Under Secretary Robert Lovett "had known in advance of the de facto reversal of the President's policy.

"President Truman was simply confounded. He felt he could not repudiate his own Secretary of State without appearing to have lost all control of United States foreign policy. Yet he was entirely unwilling to reverse his long-standing commitment to partition."