

Clark Tells Panel Taps Aren't Vital

AP Wire
Attorney General Ramsey

Clark told the Senate yesterday that wiretapping and eavesdropping are not essential to successful law enforcement.

He asked a Senate Judiciary subcommittee to approve the Administration's bill banning their use in all but national security cases, and then only when approved in writing by the Attorney General.

Clark said the Justice Department found that it made more successful arrests after it stopped tapping wires in criminal cases. Manpower can be better used in other investigative work, he explained.

The only Senator who showed up to hear Clark was Sen. Edward V. Long (D-Mo.), the Senate's leading advocate of the right of privacy. There is considerable opposition in both houses, however, to forbidding wiretapping against organized crime.

In response to questioning by Long, Clark also expressed disapproval of public use of private police, as used by Florida's Gov. Claude Kirk in his crime crusade.

Clark said the use of a private organization with no public responsibility raises "quite serious questions. It is my belief that if public law enforcement is inadequate, there is little hope we can obtain it by private means. That is why we need the 'safe streets' bill."