

Colson Hits War Views Of 4 on Hill

By Jules Witcover

Washington Post Staff Writer

Departing White House political adviser Charles W. Colson last night listed former Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford and four antiwar Democratic senators as members of a "sellout brigade" whose views prolonged the Vietnam war.

Colson, interviewed on the public television network (WETA), and Clifford and Sens. J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.), George McGovern (D-S.D.), Frank Church (D-Idaho) and Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) "would have had us leave Vietnam without regard to the consequences."

Their opposition to Mr. Nixon, he charged, "enormously" impeded his quest for peace by "time and time again" undercutting negotiations with their antiwar resolutions "at their most unfortunate times."

Had Mr. Nixon had the kind of bipartisan support President Eisenhower enjoyed from Democratic leaders Lyndon B. Johnson and Sam Rayburn in the 1950s, Colson said, "I think the war would have ended much sooner than it did."

The President's special counsel also charged that "after a period of years many of the critics in the press began to have almost a vested interest in our failure . . . I think they were disappointed that we succeeded where they said that success would be impossible."

Colson in effect fleshed out a charge by President Nixon in his Wednesday press conference that "the most outspoken advocates of peace at any price" were those least pleased with the Vietnam truce.

The White House aide had used the expression "sellout brigade" once before, in a

newspaper article Tuesday complaining that the news media had fabricated a non-existent split between the President and his chief Vietnam negotiator, Henry A. Kissinger.

Colson characterized Mr. Nixon as the most unjustly put-upon President by Congress and the press in a century. "I don't think in 100 years," he told interviewer Elizabeth Drew, "We have had

a President who has had to take more scorn and heat and criticism from those who would have had us leave Vietnam regardless of the consequences . . ."

Colson singled out Clifford for a memorandum he is said to have written to McGovern, the Democratic presidential nominee, a few days before the November election. In it, Colson said, "Clifford said there can never be a negotiated settlement in Vietnam; the only way out of Vietnam is to withdraw in exchange for our prisoners, just get out. Forget the consequences to 50 million people who live in Southeast Asia."

Colson told Mrs. Drew, "I think (it is) the grossest hypocrisy, really shocking hypocrisy, of the man who contributed so much to our being in Vietnam, for him to be so consistently wrong and so harsh in his criticism of the president."

Clifford, in the memorandum as reprinted in a column by Tom Braden in The Washington Post of Jan. 13, did not say, as Colson suggested, that there could never be a negotiated settlement. The memo said there was no peace agreement at the time and Kissinger's contention that "peace is at hand" was, in Clifford's words, "a perversion of the truth."

"Because of the objections the administration now levels against the agreement with Hanoi and because of President Thieu's attitude," the memo said, "there appears to be no peace on this basis in the foreseeable future."

Colson did not elaborate on his description of Clifford as "the man who contributed so much to our being in Vietnam."

Clifford, a private adviser to President Johnson and considered at the time to be a hawk on the war, undertook an extensive review of the war shortly after becoming Secretary of Defense in 1968. As a result of it, he strongly urged the President to deny an additional 206,000 U.S. troops then being sought for Vietnam by the American command and to shift the pursuit of a settlement from the battlefield to the negotiations table. Mr. Johnson took his advice.