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Clark-Surveillance 290

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WASHINGTON AP - Former Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark denied Saturday he had any knowledge, while an official in the Johnson administration, of any military surveillance of civilians.

"If I had, I would have been pretty upset," said Clark in the wake of published reports he was instrumental in stepping up military and other government intelligence activities during the rash of civil disturbances in 1967 and 1968.

But he acknowledged that a special unit in the Justice Department received and coordinated intelligence information on civil disturbances while he was in office.

In a telephone interview, Clark said he now believes that the military did engage in surveillance of civilians. But he contended it was done without the knowledge or approval of the Justice Department or former President Lyndon B. Johnson.

"In my judgment, it was done without his (Johnson's) knowledge," Clark said. "I don't think he would have liked it if he had known about it."

Clark said he had "no recollection" of whether the military intelligence apparatus contributed to the information compiled and summarized daily by the department's Interdivisional Information Unit (IDIU).

Information received by the IDIU came principally from the FBI, the department's civil rights and criminal divisions and clippings from newspapers and magazines, he said.

The main purpose of the IDIU, Clark said, was to coordinate intelligence from within the department "so the Department of Justice would know what information it had."

During his tenure, Clark said, the IDIU was staffed by three or four persons. It had no intelligence-gathering functions, he said.

"There were only a handful of people," he said. "They could barely keep up with the information coming in."

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