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Clark-Riots 380

WASHINGTON AP - Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark called Sunday for a major rebuilding of American cities in which riot prevention would get top priority. And he asserted such disorders can be prevented. He pledged riots would be met with adequate force, but cautioned, "We can cause riots by fear itself and by an overconcern. And the greater need today is to work on prevention."

The attorney general blamed urban turbulence on "the conditions of the cities—highly inflammable—and the real poverty and the real misery and the real anger that exist there."

Clark said, "Clearly America has a very major building job to do in its cities. And law enforcement can only maintain the public peace so long when conditions are intolerable."

The nation's top law officer stressed police relations with the public, open housing and equal opportunity for all. He said police chiefs, in riot planning conferences sponsored by the Justice Department, primarily are "working for prevention and not control."

"I think we can prevent riots. Certainly our first responsibility is to prevent riots," Clark said.

Clark's assessment that riots can be prevented is in contrast to recent statements by various public figures, including President Johnson, who have been saying, in effect, that riots this summer are pretty much inevitable.

The attorney general appeared on the NBC television-radio interview "Meet the Press."

He echoed a warning that civil disobedience and interference with the government would bring arrest, but denied this was a threat to Dr. Martin Luther King, who plans a poverty march on Washington in April.

"This is not a direct threat to anyone but a mere statement as to law enforcement purpose," Clark said.

King has said his demonstration will "escalate to disruptive proportions" if Congress doesn't help the needy. Clark said interference with government processes "will be met with adequate law enforcement and whoever engages in that conduct will be arrested."

Clark repeated his viewpoint that New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's controversial investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy has produced no new evidence.

He said also no factual basis has been found to suggest there has been foreign involvement in urban rioting and antiwar demonstrations.

Clark conceded the notion that FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover is somewhat a law unto himself in the Justice Department was not quite an old wives' tale. Clark said Hoover had a certain independence, but asserted the FBI boss always had cooperated fully with him.

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