

# Clark Says North Vietnam May Free a Few P.O.W.'s

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SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 14— Ramsey Clark, a former United States Attorney General, said here today that he thought that a few American prisoners of war would be released soon by North Vietnam.

Mr. Clark's statement was made at a news conference following a two-week visit to North Vietnam that ended Saturday.

"I urged them to release some prisoners, and I say frankly I think they will—a few, I don't know when," he said. "But what they tell you—and you know I have a little difficulty arguing with it—is 'we can't release pilots when pilots are bombing our children.'"

Mr. Clark chose his words carefully when asked whether American military commanders had attempted deliberately to

destroy the system of dikes in North Vietnam.

"I saw damage to dikes, sluices and canals of a substantial nature at least six places," he said in the news conference at the St. Francis Hotel here. "At a couple of places, it was evident that it was a massive assault. At the time I saw it, there were no military targets there."

He said also that he recognized that such targets, perhaps anti-aircraft batteries, could have been moved away before he saw the dike damage.

In a 40-minute statement and in the 20 minutes of questioning that followed, Mr. Clark repeatedly attacked the bombing on moral grounds. He said he had seen a hospital that was destroyed by bombs between last December, when, he said, it was

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seen by an American visitor, and the time Mr. Clark saw it.

"We are bombing the hell out of that poor land," he said. "We are hitting hospitals. I can't tell you whether it's deliberate. But to the people who are getting hit, it doesn't make much difference, does it?"

Mr. Clark said that he had a letter from Hanoi's Deputy Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nguyen Duy Trinh, concerning the release of prisoners.

He did not distribute copies of the letter but he read from his own notes of Mr. Trinh's statements during their two-hour and 45-minute interview. Mr. Clark made the point that the notes were based on the minister's statements as translated into English.

Reading from his notes, Mr. Clark quoted Mr. Trinh as having said: "With the agreement on the military and political issue, I will guarantee the solution of the prisoner problem and the return of all the prisoners."

Another statement was that a settlement must be made on the "Provisional Revolutionary Government's seven points and two additions" before the prisoner issue is resolved.

On July 1, 1971, the Vietcong proposed a seven-point peace plan in Paris that provided for a simultaneous exchange of all prisoners and the withdrawal of United States and allied forces from South Vietnam.

Mr. Clark quoted Mr. Trinh as having said that "Nixon is more interested in the fate of the Thieu Government than in the fate of the U.S. prisoners."

Mr. Clark said he had been taken one night to a prisoner of war camp, which he did not name or locate, and permitted to see the rooms of 10 prisoners, and to talk to the prisoners for a long period. He said he had asked that the prisoners be released.

### "They've Got the Power"

"I talked and pleaded because that's all I could do," he said. "You can't demand. When it comes to the prisoners, they've got the power, don't they? The B-52's haven't done much good yet."

"I've seen a lot of prisons in my life," said Mr. Clark, who as Attorney General had control of Federal prisons in the United States. "These 10 men were unquestionably humanely treated, well treated. Their individual rooms were better and bigger than the rooms in essentially every prison I have ever visited anywhere."

He said the food was ample and that there was a vegetable garden outside. He said that the

men thought the prison had been there since 1965, although the man who had been there longest had arrived in the spring of 1971. Mr. Clark said that the men had told him the prison was much the same as others they had been in.

"I believe them," he said. During the news conference Mr. Clark endorsed Senator George McGovern for President. The endorsement came when Mr. Clark was explaining that an editor in Hanoi had told him that "if there were a change of administration" the prisoners would be released on Jan. 20, 1973—Inauguration Day.

It was the editor's statement, not his, Mr. Clark said. But in response to a question, he said that he supported Senator McGovern and agreed with the North Vietnamese editor's judgment.

Mr. Clark said that he had not talked with Senator McGovern before going to Vietnam and that "I intend to call him, and tell him that if he wishes I would give him a complete briefing."

In response to the accusation that he had helped contribute to the propaganda broadcast by the Hanoi radio, Mr. Clark said that he had not accepted an invitation to speak on the station.

In reference to his remarks today, he said, "they could use this to broadcast on radio Hanoi." He suggested that some of his news conference statements to journalists in Hanoi might have been broadcast.

He said he believed that as a private citizen he had a right to go to North Vietnam and do what he could try to bring peace and to gain release of the prisoners.