

# Clark Clarifies Belief on POWs

By Charles Howe

Former Attorney General Ramsey Clark said here yesterday he believes that if George McGovern is elected President this will lead to freedom for American prisoners of war in North Vietnam.

But at a jam-packed press conference at the St. Francis Hotel, Clark hastened to add that if the current administration stops bombing North Vietnam, neither peace nor a release of the prisoners will automatically follow.

Just back from a two-week tour of North Vietnam, Clark suggested he was misquoted in some reports of a two-minute press conference he held at San Francisco International Airport Sunday night.

## IMPRESSION

On Sunday night some reporters covering Clark's arrival got the impression he had said American prisoners would be released as soon as the bombing of North Vietnam was stopped by the Nixon administration.

But at yesterday's conference — attended by more than 100 journalists — Clark said he "certainly didn't mean to give that impression . . . I certainly didn't mean to say that if, in fact, I said it."

Clark said he made his two-week tour "as a private citizen. I do not speak for George McGovern. I am, however, for McGovern," he added, both as a Democrat and as a partisan of McGovern's end-the-war-now politics.

## BOMBING

His voice sometimes rising, Clark reaffirmed earlier statements he had made of widespread destruction — of homes, schools, dikes, churches and hospitals — by American bombing.

During his two-week visit, Clark said, he spent more than an hour discussing the war with Nguyen Duy Trinh, North Vietnam's foreign minister and deputy premier.

Clark said Trinh, repeated his country's position that "the political and military problems" of all of Vietnam are inseparable.

Clark said Trinh told him the 500 known American prisoners will be released "if there is reached a settlement on the seven points" — the key elements involving American withdrawal from Vietnam, removing support from the Thieu government in the South and the creation of a tripartite coalition government.

While in North Vietnam,

where he covered more than 600 miles during his travels, Clark said he was "invited" to speak on Radio Hanoi but declined the invitation.

"I was born an American . . . I will die an American," he said. "What I have to say (today) I will say directly to the American people," he told the press conference.

Remarks attributed to Clark have been reportedly broadcast over Radio Hanoi and Clark has received much criticism from some Republican leaders, among them former Attorney General John Mitchell.

"Name calling is not going to solve the problem," Clark said.

## DIKES

Clark said a team of French scientists accompanying him during his stay in North Vietnam is still studying photographs and other documents to determine if the United States is deliberately bombing dikes — a policy that could lead to massive flooding.

"But I intend to ask the Defense Department about the bombings," Clark added.

Ticking off the damaged civilian areas he saw and with his voice rising almost to a shout, Clark said:

"The bombing is inhumane beyond description . . . it is killing little babies and old men . . . I'm kind of slow to get mad but when I get mad, by God, I get mad . . ."

Despite the punishment by air that North Vietnam is taking daily, Clark said, the people were uniformly kind to him.

"But believe me, it's hard when they (North Vietnamese) look you in the face and say: 'Why do you bomb us?'"

"God knows, I can't tell them why!"