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MITCHELL ASSERTS CLARK WAS DUPED

Ex-Nixon Aide Charges Trip
Is Used for Propaganda

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 15 —

John N. Mitchell, the former head of President Nixon's reelection organization, said today that Ramsey Clark had been "duped" during a recent visit to North Vietnam and had allowed himself to be used by that country in a propaganda campaign.

Mr. Mitchell was among several prominent Republicans who assailed Mr. Clark today for saying that he believed some American prisoners would be released on Jan. 20, 1973, the date of the inauguration of the President, and all of them by April 20, 1973, if Senator George McGovern was elected president.

Mr. Mitchell said that the former Attorney General was playing upon "the deep concern" of the families of the prisoners and urged Senator McGovern, the Democratic Presidential candidate, either to repudiate or endorse the statement.

In Miami Beach, after appearing before the platform committee of the Republican National Convention, Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird criticized Mr. Clark's report that American prisoners were being treated humanely by the North Vietnamese.

The Secretary said he failed to understand how Mr. Clark could term as humane the refusal of the North Vietnamese to tell the families of prisoners or those listed as missing whether the men were alive or dead.

"I cannot describe that treatment as humane," Mr. Laird said. "It is very inhumane."

Earlier today, the Defense Department accused Mr. Clark of withholding information about American prisoners. Daniel Z. Henkin, Assistant Secretary for

Public Affairs, said Mr. Clark had an obligation "as a responsible citizen and as a former Government official" to notify in advance the families of 10 American prisoners shown in a film Mr. Clark used during an interview yesterday in San Francisco. Mr. Clark returned Sunday from a trip to North Vietnam.

Mr. Laird said the Defense Department was carefully checking pictures brought from North Vietnam by Mr. Clark, but he said a majority of the American prisoners shown in them "are people who have been in this role before."

Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the Senate minority leader, joined the attacks on Mr. Clark by saying here that the 44-year-old son of Tom Clark, the former Supreme Court Justice, had allowed himself "to be used by Hanoi." On a short speech on the Senate floor, Senator Scott said Mr. Clark had injected Presidential politics into the prisoner-of-war issue.

"I hope the American people will reject this sort of campaigning over the enemy's borders," Senator Scott said.

Late yesterday, Senator Jacob K. Javits, the New York Republican, said he questioned the advisability of Mr. Clark's broadcasts over the Hanoi radio. Mr. Clark today said that he had not made an appearance on Hanoi radio but had made remarks to journalists that may have been recorded and broadcast later.

One Democrat, Senator Henry M. Jackson of Washington, also questioned the propriety of Mr. Clark's statements. Appearing on the National Broadcasting Company's "Today" show, Mr. Jackson said he believed Mr. Clark should not make "general statements without saying he was taking a conducted tour" in North Vietnam.

"He ought to make a full disclosure about what he asked to see, what he saw and what he did not see," Mr. Jackson said.

Mr. Clark, whose relationship with the Republican hierarchy has been strained since President Nixon described him as "soft on law and order" in 1968, has reported that he observed some damage to the North Vietnamese dike system from American bombing and that he saw the ruins of a bombed hospital.

He was careful to point out, however, that he had no way of knowing whether the dikes or the hospital had been deliberate targets of American bombers.