

Clark DeploresSilence on War

Says He Should Have
Taken Stand When
In Cabinet

by Wallace Turner
Special to [NYTimes]

San Francisco,
Aug. 15 - Ramsey Clark
said here last night
that he had been wrong
not to speak out
against the Vietnam
war when he was Deputy
Attorney General and
then Attorney General
in President Johnson's
Cabinet while the war
was expanding.

Mr. Clark has become
the center of contro-
versy since his return
Sunday night from Hanoi.

He said at a dinner
meeting with a small
group of reporters last
night that he had been
wrong when he tried to
persuade the Rev. Dr.
Martin Luther King Jr.
not to oppose the war.
He said that he had
feared this would
detract from Dr. King's
leadership in the civil
rights movement.

"But I didn't have my
eye on the ball,"
Mr. Clark said.

Mr. Clark also said
he had no doubt that
hospitals in North
Vietnam had been bombed,
and when he was asked
if pilots were
responsible for this,
he said, "I believe in
individual responsi-
bility."

"They're good guys
and they're doing bad
things," he said.

"Sometimes good guys
do bad things. I'm a
good guy and I've
sometimes done bad
things."

I've sometimes done bad things."

In this same vein, at another
point he said, "You can't work
all week in the napalm factory
and then march on Saturday
in the peace parade."

Analogy Called Accurate

A questioner asked if he had
not done that same thing by
sitting in the Johnson Cabinet
while refusing to attack the
war. At first he demurred, but
then, with a smile, Mr. Clark
said the analogy was accurate,
although he added, "We didn't
have the napalm factory, but
we sure used a lot of it."

Except for these exchanges,
he refused to discuss the pos-
sible inconsistency of his posi-
tion as a high official in the
Johnson Administration during
the widening of the war and
his position now as a critic of
policies of the Nixon Adminis-
tration.

"There is too much tendency
in the executive branch not to
argue with policy," he said.

Mr. Clark also enlarged on
his story of a visit to a prisoner
of war camp, part of which
was told at a news conference
yesterday. He said he visited
for about two hours with 10
prisoners whom he was able to
photograph and record on tape.

"They get upset over talk
about the prisoners," Mr. Clark
said of North Vietnamese offi-
cials. "They get red in the face
and shout."

He said the prisoner question
had been high in his mind
since 1969 when he sought
unsuccessfully to go to North
Vietnam. He raised the request
to visit a camp at a dinner in
Hanoi, and at night was driven
to a camp.

Camp Near Hanoi

He said the camp was in the
Hanoi area, and that he was
bound not to try to pinpoint
where it was. He said it was
reached in a drive down a
long alley that was barred at
the end by a single bamboo
pole, attended by a guard with
a rifle.

Mr. Clark said he carried
bags of photographic equip-
ment when he entered the
camp, but was not searched.
He described the building as
a single-story quadrangle with
a large auditorium at one side
and the three other sides
made up of buildings divided
into rooms.

He was interviewed by the
camp commandant, and then
taken to one of the buildings.
The building was made up of
a series of five rooms of about
the same size, each with two
prisoners living in it, and a
sixth room, which was larger,
that was used as a mess hall.

"This place seemed to be
built for some other purpose
and had been converted to a
prison camp," Mr. Clark said.
He said he was told that more

than 25 prisoners were held
there, but that he estimated it
might be about 40.

Lead Spartan Life

Mr. Clark said again that the
prisoners, in his estimation,
were in good health and were
being treated humanely. It was
also plain, although not said,
that they live a most Spartan
existence—even to doing their
laundry everyday because they
have no extra clothing avail-
able.

He said that they complained
of the food, although they had
plenty, and that the beds were
too small for some of them.
The prisoners asked his ad-
vice on what would happen to
them if they spoke out in
criticism of the war, Mr. Clark
said.

He said he told them that he
disliked giving "curbstone"
opinions without adequate re-
search, and that he believed
they should not talk about
military operations, but that
"their First Amendment rights
follow them" and if they were
charged with a crime he would
try to defend them.