

Clifford Opposes Any Halt In Vietnam Bombing Now

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By JOHN W. FINNEY
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WASHINGTON, Jan. 25—Clark M. Clifford emphasized today that as Secretary of Defense he would oppose any cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam under present political and military circumstances.

Testifying before the Senate

Excerpts from Clifford hearing
are printed on Page 14.

Armed Services Committee, Mr. Clifford defended the military effectiveness of the bombing and made clear that he believed it should continue until Hanoi retreats from its present "intransigent attitude."

Mr. Clifford indicated, however, that the Administration was not asking North Vietnam to end all military activity in the South or stop its "normal" supply of men and supplies into South Vietnam. All the Administration demands, he suggested, is that North Vietnam not take advantage of a bombing suspension by increasing the flow of men and supplies into the South.

The committee quickly and unanimously approved the nomination of Mr. Clifford, a Washington lawyer and longtime friend and adviser of President Johnson, to succeed Robert S. McNamara as Secretary of Defense.

The nomination will be formally submitted to the Senate next week, and the expectation was that Mr. Clifford would assume command of the defense establishment by the middle of next month.

From the lengthy testimony it was apparent that the Clifford command would probably result in considerable change in the policy directions estab-

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lished during Mr. McNamara's seven years at the Pentagon.

From the cordial political reception accorded Mr. Clifford, it was apparent that he could be expected to bring an end to the growing tension, sometimes bordering on hostility, that had been developing between the Congressional armed services committees and the Defense Department under Mr. McNamara. Under questioning for nearly three hours, Mr. Clifford repeatedly drew himself apart from Mr. McNamara's policy in several areas, to the evident satisfaction of committee members.

In contrast to Mr. McNamara's suggestions that the United States could move toward a position of "nuclear parity" with the Soviet Union, Mr. Clifford came out squarely and emphatically for maintaining a clear-cut "nuclear supremacy."

In other areas, Mr. Clifford said the following:

¶He "intuitively" supports a follow-on bomber for the B-52, a step opposed for years by Mr. McNamara.

¶He has serious reservations about the controversial McNamara proposal for merging the Army Reserves into the National Guard.

¶He favors, though he did not specifically commit himself, the construction of more nuclear-powered warships than has been permitted in the McNamara regime.

But probably the most dramatic policy shift is likely to occur on the issue of whether to continue the bombing of North Vietnam. On this issue, it was evident from his testimony that Mr. Clifford can be expected to assume a much more "hard-line" position than Mr. McNamara's.

Shift on Bombing Seen

While never splitting with the Administration on the bombing issue, Mr. McNamara testified last August before a Senate Armed Services subcommittee that he questioned the military effectiveness of the bombing in limiting or preventing the resupply of Communist forces in South Vietnam.

In contrast, Mr. Clifford said the bombing had served "extremely useful purposes" in impeding the movement of supplies and troops into South Vietnam.

Mr. Clifford, who has served as chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, said that intelligence reports told "an exceedingly dramatic story of the value of the bombing" in describing Communist offensives that had to be canceled or delayed for lack of munitions and supplies from the North.

Citing the advantage that North Vietnam has taken of past bombing pauses for resupply efforts, Mr. Clifford took the position that any bombing suspension, without a reciprocal military move by Hanoi, would be "damaging" and lead to more American allies.

Mr. Clifford placed the burden for any suspension of the bombing upon some change in the position of North Vietnam. "In my opinion it can't stop with their present wholly and completely intransigent attitude," he said.

From the United States point of view, he said, President Johnson has offered "almost an irreducible minimum" in proposing, first in a San Antonio speech last September and then again in his State of the Union Message, that the United States would stop the bombing if North Vietnam would agree to start talks promptly and agree not to take advantage of the bombing suspension.

Mr. Clifford provided the first authoritative definition of the terms of the "San Antonio formula," particularly on what the Administration means when it says that it would "assume" that North Vietnam would not take advantage of a bombing suspension.