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Ramsey Clark Urges Senators to Support the Registration of Firearms 27 30568

By JOHN W. FINNEY Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June '26-Attorney General Ramsey Clark told a Senate subcommittee today that Congress would be failing in its responsibility to check crime if it did not include registration and licensing of firearms in a gun control bill. Testifying before the Senate. Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee, he provided the most emphatic statement yet from the Administration on the need to include these two controls in the gun legislation being considered by Congress.

The National Rifle Association, meanwhile, registered with Congress its emphatic opposition to the new gun controls being proposed by the Administration.

Harold W. Glassen, president of the association, told the subcommittee that a campaign was under way "to foist upon an unsuspecting and aroused public a law that would, through is operation, sound the death knell for the shooting sport and eventually disarm the Ameri-can public."

The Administration, following the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, initially proposed legislation banning interstate mail order sales of rifles and shotguns.

On Monday, the White House proposed even more stringent controls, by requesting legislation requiring Federal registration of all firearms and licensing by either the states or the Federal Government of all gun owners.

The White House, however, has left somewhat unclear whether it wants Congress to include the registration and licensing controls in a package gun control bill or whether it

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would prefer that Congress act first and squarely on the mail order legislation.

But Mr. Clark left no doubt that he personally believed registration and licensing controls should be included in any gun bill.

The Attorney General's basic argument was that while the ban on interstate mail orders would help stem the traf-ficking in firearms, it would not inhibit 'the criminal use of firearms or help directly in crime prevention.

A similar argument was pre-sented to the subcommittee by Mayor Lindsay of New York and the former astronaut, John

and the former astronaut, John H. Glenn Jr. The latter testified as chairman of the newly formed Emergency Committee for Gun Control. Testifying before an over-flow audience in the Senate's large Caucus Room, Mr. Clark said registration and licensing of firearms were "essential to comprehensive control." The advantage of a Federal

The advantage of a Federal ban on interstate mail order sales, as described by Mr. Clark, is that this would pro-

Clark, is that this would pro-vide a framework for states to adopt their own effective con-trols over the purchase or pos-session of firearms. But registration, he said, would provide "a tremendous aid to law enforcement" in checking on guns in crimes and in "smoking out" criminals who possess guns illegally. With licensing, he said, it would be easier to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, drug addicts, mental incompe-tents and alcoholics. Committee to Meet

Committee to Meet

Under the Administration's proposal, no person would be able to purchase or possess a gun or ammunition without a gun or ammunition without a license, which could be ob-tained only after a police de-partment and a physician had attested that the person was qualified to possess a gun. The question of whether to add registration and licensing

controls to the Administration's bill will be taken up tomorrow when the full Senate Judiciary Committee meets. At that point, Senator Joseph D. Tydings, Democrat of Maryland, will offer registration and licensing amendments.

So closely divided is the judiciary committee that the outcome may depend upon whether Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, ends the mourning over the death of his brother and appears at the meeting to vote.

In his first public statement in the Senate since the death of his brother June 6, Senator of his brother June 6, Senator Kennedy, in a letter to Senator Thomas J. Dodd, Democrat of Connecticut, the subcommittee chairman, said that passage of a strong and effective Federal gun law is "long overdue." He made clear that he sup-ported both registration and licensing of finearms

licensing of firearms.

Delay Is Sought

As the showdown approached,

the opposition resorted to de-laying tactics, contending that there had been insufficient hearings on registration and licensing controls for the committee to consider such legislation.

tion. At one point, Senator Strom Thurmond, Republican of South Carolina, cut off the subcom-mittee hearings, which had been scheduled to run through-out the day, by objecting to a meeting while the Senate was in session.

In session. Under the rules of the Senate, his objection forced a recess in the hearing, with several witnesses unheard.

Senator Roman L. Hruska, Republican of Nebraska, leader of the opposition to stronger

controls, complained that the controls, complained that the Senate committee was being forced to make "a snap judg-ment overnight" on legislation submitted only yesterday by the Administration and warned against "sacrificing the merit and propriety of legislation to the expediency of speed." Sheldon S. Cohen, director of the Internal Revenue Serv-ice, estimated that it would re-quire \$25-million to establish

quire \$25-million to establish the registration system, with its planned computers, and about \$22-million a year to operate.

In arguing for stronger con-trols, Colonel Glenn, a friend of Senator Kennedy's, recalled how it had been his "awful duty" to tell six children of the Sonator that their fother had Senator that their father had been killed.

"We simply cannot permit such senseless killing to con-tinue," he said. "We must do all we can to prevent those who should not have guns from get-ting them." Colonel Glenn said that the

Emergency Committee, com-posed of prominent citizens, took the position that at the minimum an "effective" bill must contain registration and licensing as well as a ban on interstate sales.

interstate sales. Without these three key pro-visions, he said, any legislation "would fail to provide the American people with the safe-guards so badly needed to con-trol the unchecked flow and the irresponsible use of guns." He twitted the National Rifle Association for opposing stronger gun controls. Noting that as a teen-ager he had taken one of the association's courses in marksmanship, which stressed responsibility and safe-ty in the use of guns, he said ty in the use of guns, he said he was "surprised that the N.R.A. would not be as in-sistent in fostering controls that would make guns less of a menace in_j this country." Mayor Lindsay argued that Federal regulations were neces-sary to make effective state and local gun controls.

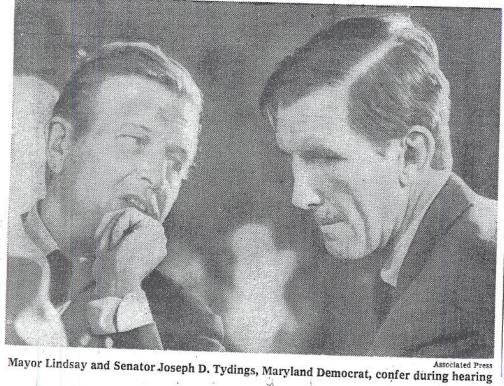
"As long as the escaped criminal or mental patient or addict can obtain a firearm by

crossing a bridge or mailing an order, no state or local government can protect its residents adequately," he said.

In response to a question by Senator Tydings, the Mayor said that if Congress failed to enact registration and licensing controls, this would make New York City's job of controlling guns "immensely more diffi-cult."



Senator Edward W. Brooke, left, Massachusetts Republican, and John H. Glenn Jr., chair-man of the Emergency Committee for Gun Control, before they testified at the hearing.



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