

Clark Replies To Attack By Hoover

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Former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, whom J. Edgar Hoover described as "jellyfish" and a "softie," replied yesterday with some of the strongest words about the FBI director ever uttered publicly by a onetime head of the Justice Department.

Under Hoover, Clark said, the FBI has become "ideological" and has lacked internal diversity. Moreover, he told newsmen, Hoover erred in calling the Black Panthers the most dangerous group in America.

"That is patently absurd," Clark asserted. "I said it at the time and I'm still convinced of it. The FBI outnumbered the black panthers seven to one, and if they can't handle it, they should have stayed in bed."

Clark's remarks came during and after a press conference called here to announce the creation of a Committee for Public Justice to counter repressive tendencies in America.

INTERVIEW

Clark was asked to comment on Hoover's description of him as a "jellyfish" in an interview published yesterday. "He's entitled to his opinion," Clark replied. "He never said it while I was there."

In the interview, Hoover said that Clark, who was President Johnson's chief law enforcement official, was the worst attorney general

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offset by "two grave shortcomings."

"If an investigator has to be anything, he has to be a disenthralled observer, a hard, hard pursuer of facts," Clark continued. "He cannot be ideological. For reasons that are unfortunate, in my judgment, the FBI became ideological some time back. This has put scales over its eyes."

FAILURE

The other failure, he maintained, was the lack of diversity within the Bureau. Clark said there was an "intolerance of different viewpoints," and that the last man who dared question Hoover "has been gone for some time."

Clark said that the pursuit of the Communist party of the USA "is an illustration of the terribly wasteful use of resources" growing out of the FBI director's belief in "the ideology of a different time."

Clark wondered "why it is so difficult for (Hoover) to begin civil rights investigations" and said there was a question how good the FBI was in investigating "unlaw-

ful police conduct."

Before responding to questions about the FBI, Clark expressed sharp criticism of the recently passed District of Columbia Crime Bill, which provides for preventive detention of some suspects and for mandatory sentences for some crimes.

BAIL

The bill's symbolism, he said, "is that force, violence and stealth can protect America." He said that denying bail to some suspects was based on the notion "that somehow or other we can guess in advance who is guilty and who is innocent."

Clark is a member of the executive council of the Committee for Public Justice, which plans to investigate political repression.

Other council members include former assistant U.S. attorneys general Roger Wilkins and Burke Marshall, and onetime Nurmeberg war crimes prosecutor Telford Taylor.

Playwright Lillian Hellman and novelist William Styron also spoke at the news conference. Miss Hellman is the principal organizer of the group.