

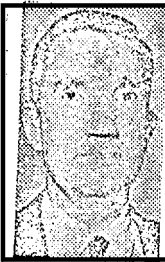
M - 552,155  
S - 717,814

AUG 16 1968

CLAYTON FRITCHEY

# Candidates Have Urge To Purge

WASHINGTON—These are dangerous days for the men who remain in Washington trying to run the government. Hardly a day goes by without somebody threatening to cut off their heads. No matter which party wins the election, it appears there is going to be a purge not only of the Cabinet, but even of those sacrosanct department heads who have wielded great power under both Democrats and Republicans. Nothing like this has been seen since 1952 when Dwight D.



Eisenhower and Richard M. Nixon—notably the latter—ran against former Sec. of State Dean Acheson as the symbol of the Truman administration's "softness on communism." This year, however, the secretary of state is only one of a number who have been singled out for liquidation. Sen. Eugene McCarthy has even had the audacity to say he intends to fire the head of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, and the head of the CIA.

CLARK

This is something new in presidential campaigning. Ordinarily, these gang-busting and cold war heroes have been untouchable politically. Indeed, John F. Kennedy's first act after winning the 1960 election was to assure the country that he intended to reappoint Hoover and Allen Dulles, then director of the CIA.

Times have changed. This year, Hubert H. Humphrey, not to be outdone by his Minnesota rival, declares he will fire Gen. Lewis Hershey, the head of Selective Service, and will not reappoint Dean Rusk, the secretary of state.

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT

NOW COMES RICHARD M. NIXON to announce that he, too, has a purge in mind. No sooner had he been nominated than he informed the nation in his acceptance speech that his first step toward cleaning up crime and restoring law enforcement would be the elimination of Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark.

In view of the threats made by McCarthy and Humphrey, the Democrats can hardly complain about Nixon's picking on Clark, but they would be on firm ground if they questioned his judgment. It is not going to be easy to convince most Americans that Clark has been soft on crime, or derelict in his duty.

The former vice president's attack on the attorney general may please prominent Southern supporters like Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.), who hate Clark for his unflinching defense of civil rights, but this by no means reflects the way the rest of the country feels. If Nixon really means business about improving law enforcement, he may, if elected, find himself carrying on the policies of Clark rather than ditching them.

It is instructive to recall what happened after Gen. Eisenhower and Nixon came to power in 1953. Acheson, of course, resigned, but the new administration promptly embraced his cold war policy in its entirety and pursued it for eight years—even after it had become obsolete. In real life, Acheson was always a hard-liner. It is difficult now to believe that Nixon could ever have persuaded the country that Acheson was soft on communism.

Perhaps this success encourages Nixon to believe he can invent a new devil in Ramsey Clark, although Clark has administered justice as firmly as Acheson contained communism. If Nixon finds a new attorney general who does as well as the incumbent he will be a lucky President.

LAW ENFORCEMENT is primarily a local responsibility in the United States. Nevertheless, President Johnson and Clark have taken the lead in trying to improve it. For over two years they have been prodding Congress to pass a new crime bill.

Moreover, Clark joined Mr. Johnson in pressing hard for new legislation to control the sale and use of guns, a reform on which the GOP nominee has had little to say. If Nixon reaches the White House, he will find that solving crime in America is not a simple matter of changing the attorney general. He will discover that the chief problem is getting Congress to do anything constructive if it costs serious money or offends special interests.

Perhaps it would be just as well if all the presidential candidates called off the firing squads. It is, at best, a dubious form of campaigning.