



Department of Justice

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BEFORE THE CONFERENCE ON CRIME AND THE URBAN CRISIS
OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY COMMITTEE OF THE
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

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I come to you this evening to talk about crime --- one of the most critical issues of our day. And I come, not only as Attorney General, but as a lawyer and a citizen desperately searching for ideas and solutions.

You and I --- here in the relative security of this ballroom --- must not take comfort in the historic palliative that crime is an old phenomenon. It is true that crime has always afflicted human society. It is also true that all civilized societies have dedicated their resources to control crime --- to establish and maintain a code of conduct to serve the needs of the people.

We have read of the aristocratic ideals of Plato's Republic with its cynicism toward popular justice. The simplistic philosophy of the talionic law --- "eye for eye." The complex syllogisms of feudalism which borrowed from Imperial Rome.

The American public must not be mollified by recollections of the past as in San Francisco 100 years ago when ---and I quote from a journal of the period --- "No decent man was in safety to walk the street after dark, while at all hours both day and night, his property was jeopardized by incendiarism and burglary."

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In this nation, we continue to combat crime drawing on the philosophies of the great common lawyers of the 17th and 18th centuries --- on Coke and Blackstone --- and on the enlightenment principles of Jefferson and the Framers of our Constitution.

The goal of our nation is freedom and personal dignity for all our citizens. And we have yet to prove to the world that, in the long run, this constitutional experiment will endure.

Today, crime has assumed a new and frightening dimension which is casting in doubt our traditional ability to be the free and independent men that our forefathers were.

The simple fact is that crime is intimidating us. --- is forcing us --- to change the fabric of our society and our inability to control crime is a courtship with national disaster.

THE FACTS

The tragic statistics are a matter of public record. The most recent F.B.I. bulletin reports that crime rose 19 per cent in the first 9 months of 1968 over a similar period in 1967: that the total number of crimes reported in 1968 will be about 4.6 million or about three quarters of a million more crimes than in 1967.

This year, one out of every 50 citizens will be the victim of a crime and one out of every 20 juveniles will commit a criminal act. Juvenile crime is increasing 300 per cent faster than the increase in the juvenile population.

In the cities, the facts are even more compelling. Our urban areas have 250 per cent more serious crime than our suburban areas and 500 per cent more crime than our rural areas. For example, in crimes of personal violence, a Negro housewife in the city is many times more likely to be mugged and assaulted than a suburban housewife.

Estimates for the future are bleak. The National Crime Commission said that in the next decade crime will increase more rapidly than the population.

The costs of crime continue to grow. In 1967, it was \$27 billion; in 1968, \$31 billion --- a cold evaluation that does not consider the emotional scar of a disabled victim or a family whose young son must be sent to a penal institution.

The gravity of the problem now reaches out further than the individual victim and the criminal --- further than the computerized statistics which cross my desk every day in despondent volume.

Fear of crime --- by the housewife and the school child, by merchant and the laborer --- fear is forcing us, a free people, to alter our pattern of life, especially after sundown.

There is an increasing tendency to withdraw from our neighbors, to fear all strangers and to limit our activities to "safe" areas.

The result is a terrible sense of defeat. Those who have fled from the city find increasing crime in the suburbs. Those who have stayed have found muggings and riots. Those who have hoped for a quick and simple solution have found no effective programs forthcoming.

The evidence is conclusive. Crime is crushing us. Despite a substantial federal role, the trend has not been reversed.

And thus, I must repeat to you what President Nixon said in his inaugural address:

"We are approaching the limits of what government alone can do."

We must reach beyond government and enlist the "legions of the concerned and the committed."

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POTENTIAL FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The tradition of this nation is founded on the voluntary participation of its citizens in solving great problems. When disaster comes --- rank and station, race and ethnic background, democrat and republican --- we have joined and together we have prevailed.

The bitter divisions in the Concord Town meetings of 1775 were forgotten at the bridge. The bitter divisions of the 20th century are forgotten in the jungles of Vietnam.

I use these battle metaphors purposely in asking you to enlist in the war against crime.

As you know, we have a tradition of citizen action in crime control. The father of the American probation system was a Boston shoemaker who volunteered to rehabilitate alcoholics in 1841. Since 1907, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, starting with one office, has expanded to 21 states with a broad program of anti-crime projects.

Today, millions of Americans want to enlist. Throughout the recent political campaign we heard: "What can I do? I am willing to help."

In a recent poll conducted for the Joint Commission on Correctional Manpower, it was reported:

"At least 10 per cent of the public would be interested in serving as volunteer workers in juvenile programs, in helping to get jobs for ex-prisoners and in working on citizen committees on organized crime --- if asked" --- ladies and gentlemen --- if asked.

We know these volunteers can help. There are more than one million independent volunteer organizations in the United States; 320,000 churches with more than 100 million members; 2,000 united funds and community chests; 35,000 voluntary hospitals; 6,000 private foundations; 100,000 voluntary welfare organizations; 36 million Americans in

fraternal and service organizations. A nationwide poll estimates that 61 million adult Americans would contribute 245 million manhours every week to voluntary activities. Now they must be enlisted to fight crime.

Individuals can enlist. In Royal Oak, Michigan, retired businessmen, corporation executives and lawyers give their time to work with young people on probation.

Civic groups can enlist.

Kiwanis International has an anti-delinquency campaign, and its pamphlet, "You and the Law" reaches thousands of schools. It brings together police and students to discuss crime before crime is committed.

Corporations can enlist. The Aetna Life and Casualty Company has made a material contribution to the rehabilitation of offenders with its "bonabond" program. This plan, run by ex-offenders, supplies performance bonds which often make the difference between a job for the released offender and a return to a life of crime.

Professional groups can enlist.

The American Bar Association has operated effective programs on the local level through its Criminal Law Section and its Special Committee. The National Advertising Council drew up a National Auto Theft Prevention Program.

Similarly, the Boy Scouts, the Chambers of Commerce and hundreds of others have engaged in significant volunteer projects.

There can be no doubt that Americans are willing to carry on the voluntary tradition in the war against crime.

There should be no doubt, either, about the position of the Administration and the Department of Justice.

We are pledged to seek, to encourage and to cooperate with the private sector. "What has to be done," President Nixon has said, "has to be done by the government and the people together."

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We are now anxious to give our support to anti-crime activities which will draw millions of volunteer manhours and dollars to the tasks of criminal justice.

MAXIMIZING EFFECTIVENESS

The main problem is maximizing the effectiveness of private sector participation -- by professional organizations, voluntary groups, foundations, businesses, labor organizations, and individuals. How can we assure high quality anti-crime programs which are adequately planned, staffed and funded?

As a preface to this answer, I must emphasize to you my belief that crime is basically a local problem and must be solved on the local level. You know --- or you should know --- the potential of your local law enforcement agencies, your local courts and your local penal institutions. The federal government has a role --- a critical one. But we, 3000 miles away in Washington, have no intention of managing your community affairs.

I must also emphasize that crime is a complex problem. There is ghetto crime and suburban crime, street crime and organized crime, adult crime and juvenile crime. And even within these categories, there are important differences. Take murder, for example, 87.8 per cent of all homicides occur between acquaintances or relations. We cannot hope to prevent many of these crimes with the usual police patrols. Crime control in this offense category depends in large part on family counseling, on police units specially trained for family disputes and on family courts.

Crime control is more than a matter of apprehending law violators. It reaches out to broad social problems of poor housing, poor schools and lack of employment --- issues which touch on the deepest divisions in our society.

Thus, if crime is to be reduced --- assaulted effectively on the local level --- there must be professional guidance and cooperation between the government institutions and the private sector. Crime will not succumb merely to

money and good intentions. Indeed, the amateur cure-all program --- no matter how well motivated --- could prove damaging in the long run.

The type of expertise which is needed can be provided in large measure by the professional private organizations. You are familiar with these groups --- the National Council, the American Bar Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Citizens for Justice with Order and others. They are knowledgeable in the crime field. Their organizations include persons with vast experience in matters of court personnel, prison administration, prosecution, and education. It is to these professional groups --- many of whom are represented here --- that civic organizations, fraternal organizations and other private groups must turn for guidance.

It further would appear that the most effective way to secure coordination of local government and the private sector is through the establishment of local crime coordinating councils --- councils composed of official representatives from law enforcement, the courts, the corrections system, and the social welfare agencies as well as representatives from private professional groups, volunteer organizations, and private enterprise.

These local councils would have access to all of the information which is necessary for determining local priorities. They would also establish over-all plans, eliminate duplication, aid in providing staff and funding and integrate the efforts of each group in terms of the total local crime situation.

We already have examples of what occurs when there is no coordination. In Detroit, after the riots, the local bar association marshaled round-the-clock teams to provide representation for arrested persons. But no special provision was made at the prosecutor's office, which was so overwhelmed with paperwork that cases were delayed.

In Washington, teams of young lawyers went to the precincts at night to provide regular counsel to arrested

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persons. But their detailed reports of their interviews were of little use. Liaison had not been established between these night time volunteer lawyers and the persons who represented the arrested men during the day.

Suppose there is a massive drive to increase police manpower but no similar drive to clear court backlogs? Suppose there is a major effort to train convicts but no program to employ them?

Another critical factor in volunteer participation is, of course, money. While the federal government can contribute substantially, it will not be enough to underwrite the entire nationwide program against crime.

Only with the aid of the private sector can we hope to fulfill our needs. Last year, for example, United Fund Campaigns raised a total of \$669 million. If only 10 cents out of every dollar contributed went to fight crime, that would be \$66 million --- an amount greater than the 1969 budget of our Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.

In addition, money spent by the private sector on crime prevention has impressive cost effectiveness. Some of you are familiar with the NCCD's Saginaw project for maintaining offenders in the community under adequately staffed probation services. The costs of this project were small, but its success did away with the need to spend \$42 million on new prison cells in Michigan and an estimated \$90 million for maintaining prisoners and their families over 10 years.

At the present, there is no private war chest for combatting crime.

The logical approach would be a voluntary program to raise money for crime projects. This fund raising could take the form of a unified national drive bringing together voluntary organizations, professional groups, businesses and even individuals.

Here again, there is a need for careful planning and cooperation among the private sector. It would seem advisable that --- on a national scale --- they pool their fund raising efforts and coordinate their project planning.

It would seem a waste of effort for a number of groups to approach the same local banker a number of times for anti-crime funds. It would seem a waste of volunteer and professional talent for a dozen groups to have prison rehabilitation programs and none to be concentrating on the courts.

I believe that a United Anti-Crime Fund would be a most welcome financial program and one that would offer the private sector the greatest opportunity to utilize its potential.

THE FEDERAL ROLE

And now that I have suggested the broad outlines of what you --- the private sector --- may wish to do, let me outline what this Administration can do.

We are not, as were past Administrations, interested in concentrating crime programs in the federal government. Washington shall not set the policy for the states and local governments. Further, we believe that one of the great strengths of the private sector is its imagination and initiative.

Thus, the first pledge of this Administration is to listen to the private sector --- to listen to your ideas, your problems and your solutions. Be assured that both here in San Francisco and in Washington, we shall listen and learn.

We also pledge to cut through the red tape which frequently overwhelms any attempt by private groups to reach government officials. We shall open channels of communication at the Department of Justice.

When you wish information, it will be made available promptly. Your letters will not lie unanswered. You will not become lost in the bureaucracy when you call for help. There will be prompt assistance for citizens interested in anti-crime programs.

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To further facilitate the work of the voluntary agencies, the President is considering implementation of three proposals made during the campaign:

These are:

- A cabinet level Council on Law Enforcement.
- "Town Hall" meetings on the crime problem.
- A National Information Center.

Permit me to elaborate.

The Council on Law Enforcement could be comparable in stature, purpose and responsibilities to the newly formed Urban Affairs Council and the National Security Council. It would have the duty of suggesting overall policies of the Federal government, of adjusting the Federal-state relationship on major crime control programs and their funding, and of delineating national priorities for this combined government-private sector cooperation.

The second proposal --- the "Town Hall" meetings on crime --- would be held in a number of large cities and small communities. Under the sponsorship of the President, the average citizen could come to tell his side of the story about what is happening on Main Street and what he thinks his government ought to do.

The third campaign proposal --- a National Coordinating Information Center --- would be a clearing house for the hundreds of projects. If you wished to know how a community successfully attacked its skid row problem, the Information Center could guide you to the public and private sources of information. It could offer you a list of organizations which have trained personnel to help you establish your project. It could lead you to available funding in and outside the government.

Finally, I wish to offer you the help of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration which is part of the Department of Justice.

Created by Congress under the Crime Control Act of 1968, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration has authority to make grants to public agencies, to institutions of higher learning and to private organizations. The projects which it funds may pertain to any aspect of criminal justice and the projects may be of an experimental or demonstration type.

During the last fiscal year, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration provided almost \$60 million to the states in block grants which they, in turn, could make available to local governments and qualified private groups. Generally, these grants are earmarked for two types of projects: planning projects and action projects for police, the courts and the correctional systems. The Administration may also fund private projects directly. In New York, a private group has received funds for a volunteer bowery project. Another group has received funds to investigate prison problems.

Next year, the LEAA is authorized to grant \$300 million for crime control programs. A major part of this massive infusion of funds will be on the state level and some of it should be made available to worthwhile private projects.

Thus, with a privately financed United Anti-Crime Fund plus special funding from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, the private sector could have a firm foundation for a well-coordinated, well-financed and well-planned assault on society's age old enemy.

But let me leave you with one final thought: Crime is deep-rooted and ugly and its defeat will take many years of hard work. If your volunteer project is with juvenile delinquents, be prepared to face rejection. If your project is prisons, be prepared to face despondency and failure --- symbols of the urban crisis. Be prepared to face poverty and ignorance, human misery and obscenities. Be prepared to endure and to fight long and hard.