



Department of Justice

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ADDRESS

BY

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THE ARENA
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1. INTRODUCTION

I would like, for a few moments, to address you on a general topic that is causing me increasing concern. It is the problem of cynicism in America. This is an attitude which I think encompasses many other problems--such as crime and civil disorders and Vietnam and inflation--and which is rooted in the nature of our society.

We are, as you know, a pluralistic nation and we are proud of it. Since 1820, nine foreign nations have each sent us one million or more immigrants. Our citizens belong to at least 80 separate religious groups which have memberships of 50,000 or more.

But this easily identifiable pluralism--by religion and by national origin--is cross-cut by geographical regionalism (such as the north and the south); by economic classification (such as blue collar worker and white collar worker); and by area differences (such as the city dweller, the suburbanite and the rural resident).

But perhaps most importantly, we boast the pluralism of ideas--of permitting opinion which ranges from the extreme right to the extreme left; and of assimilating these ideas on national issues into two large areas of agreement which are then reinterpreted into the two-party national political system.

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The strength of our form of government was immediately recognized very early in our history. A late 18th Century French political analyst commented:

"It is in the enjoyment of a dangerous freedom--(the freedom of ideas)--that Americans have learned the art of rendering the danger of freedom less formidable."

2. DISEASE OF CYNICISM

And yet, an excess of political diversity can be as dangerous as the absence of it. In our representative system, national government cannot act decisively without a national consensus. This continued inaction by government breeds the disease of cynicism which seems to be so alarmingly prevalent in our nation today--a cynicism that duly elected government, particularly the federal government, has lost its relevance to the aspirations of our society.

There are the under-privileged minorities, especially the poor and the black, who had relied on Utopian promises and now distrust the government's ability to act on their behalf.

There are the middle class working man and housewife who had unquestioningly accepted the government's ability to control the economy and then found themselves caught in increasing inflation.

There are the dissatisfied youth who reject the established political processes and who turn to violence and confrontation.

And then, of course, there are the rich and the poor, the black and the white, the city dweller and the suburbanite who are frustrated and terrorized by the inability of government to immediately solve the crime problem in the streets and the Vietnam War on the otherside of the world.

A recent survey conducted by the National Violence Commission proves the point.

In 1952, 81 percent of the persons surveyed said they thought that voting was the most efficient way to influence governmental action. In 1968, only 55 percent felt that way.

In 1952, 35 percent said that government officials did not pay much attention to them. In 1968, 43 percent felt that way.

How have we come to this state of affairs? How has the most prosperous nation in the world come to the point where many of its citizens doubt the ability of its governmental institutions to solve pressing issues?

I believe the fault, in great part, lies with the deception which was practiced over the last few years.

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The prior Administration attempted to solve problems through the illusion of words--through the projection of succeeding images of impossible dreams which were replaced by more impossible dreams when previous commitments could not be met.

This rhetorical device worked for quite awhile, mainly, I suppose, because the human mind likes to dramatize. Men are, by their very nature, intellectually attracted by the bright uniforms and loud trumpets of new ideas.

But what does one have after the parade has passed--an empty street littered with handbills and the memory of what might have been. Of course it is healthy, ever so often, to have a burst of color and imagination. But this is no replacement for well conceived and well funded programs.

It is for this reason that this Administration has been purposely low key in its public statements and in the presentation of its new programs. We do not want to offer more hope than we can realistically deliver. We do not want to create expectations based on mere words.

In evaluating the methods that this Administration should use, we came to the conclusion that we ought to emphasize some of the simple precepts of American government about which most citizens agree--fundamental concepts of governmental action which this Administration believes should be retained.

The methods that we are using to achieve social and economic progress are the methods which I think this mid-west audience understands better than most. We believe in common sense, in hard work and in quiet diligence. We believe that individuals and government should carefully plan and finance each step of the way.

We believe in consistency and in that great American genius for compromise. We believe that the extremists on both ends of the spectrum will be isolated by the great majority of Americans and that the middle course is generally the best course for this nation to pursue.

And finally, we believe that the Republican Party can prove to doubting citizens that government can be relevant to their aspirations and can produce a stable and prosperous society.

In the next few minutes, I would like to give you some examples of current problems and explain to you how we are attempting to solve them.

3. VIETNAM DEMONSTRATIONS

This week we expect upwards of 100,000 persons to appear in Washington to stage demonstrations against the war in Vietnam. The announced purpose of this group is to exert pressure on the President in order to achieve the immediate

unilateral withdrawal of American troops and the abandonment of the government and peoples of South Vietnam.

This Administration clearly recognizes the right of these people under our First Amendment to peacefully congregate in Washington and to petition the government with respect to their grievances--assumed or otherwise.

But it is the responsibility of government to see that such congregations are conducted in a peaceful and orderly fashion, uninterrupted by militant factions who would use such an occasion to foment violence.

We propose to honor our obligations in both directions. We will support the peaceful assembly and we will likewise curtail the militant factions whose sole aim is the creation of a violent confrontation.

The foreign policy of this government cannot--and will not--be formulated in the streets of Washington--or in any other street of this nation.

The President in his talk to the nation of November 3rd has reviewed the Vietnam problem with the American people and has received the backing of a substantial majority. The President does have a plan to end our involvement in the Vietnam war and it will work. This twofold plan will produce more rapid results if our peace negotiations with the other side--which will continue--are fruitful. In any event, the second part of the plan--Vietnamization of the war--is already underway with the withdrawal

of American troops. This process will continue, as circumstances permit, and end with the South Vietnamese handling their own security.

The negative cynicism of demonstrators cannot be allowed to replace the affirmative programs of those in government charged with conducting our foreign policy and carrying out our national security.

4. CRIME

Of course, I am a lawyer and not a political philosopher. But today, even the law is beginning to suffer from the popular cynicism about governmental institutions.

More particularly, there is the criticism that our system of law enforcement and criminal justice has failed to meet the problems of crime in our society.

The seriousness of the problem cannot be doubted.

The latest FBI Uniform Crime Reports show that in 1968 there were 4.5 million serious crimes committed in the United States, a 17 percent increase over 1967.

From 1960 to 1968, the volume of serious crime has risen 122 percent, while the population has increased only 11 percent. The citizen risk of becoming a victim of a crime has nearly doubled from 1960 to 1968.

In recognition of this national tragedy, we launched a comprehensive anti-crime program last January as a first priority of the Administration.

It is a program which stresses the practical aspects of criminal justice--apprehension and arrest, the prosecution of suspected criminals and the rehabilitation of convicted persons.

It is a program which stresses obtaining results as soon as possible. For while crime may or may not be solved a generation from now by the implementation of enormously expensive and radically new social concepts, the nation cannot afford to wait.

We must start and start now to get down to the dry mechanics of fighting crime on a practical level. We need more and better trained police. We need more efficient court systems. We need new corrections facilities and more rehabilitation programs.

5. AID TO STATES

President Nixon has said that "The public climate with regard to law is a function of national leadership."

Basically, the federal government has very limited legal jurisdiction over street crime--the type of crime that affects most of us more directly than others. We can set the tone for leadership. We can initiate pilot projects. We can offer financial and technical assistance. But the primary responsibility is still with the state and local governments.

Our most ambitious program to combat local street crime is the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration of the Department of Justice. LEAA is the federal government's major commitment to help states and local communities to improve their police, their criminal justice systems, their juvenile programs, and their correctional institutions.

For the current fiscal year, we may receive as much as \$275 million for the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. If appropriated, \$225 million of this is scheduled to go to cities and states for action programs.

The greatest single emphasis in the LEAA program has been and will continue to be the funding of police efforts to decrease street crime.

But police action alone cannot solve the total problem. We must bear in mind that about 45 percent of the persons who serve prison terms are subsequently arrested for additional offenses; and that more than half our crimes against property are now committed by youths under 21.

Accordingly, the LEAA action programs also contain substantial plans to increase the efficiency of the criminal courts, to improve rehabilitation efforts in our prisons and initiate and expand corrective programs for our youth.

I hope that Congress will pass the \$275 million appropriation. Law enforcement agencies in this state and in every state

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must have sufficient funds. If not, the national effort against crime will merely be another rhetorical ruse.

6. NARCOTICS

Another area in which the federal government has substantial jurisdiction involving street crime is the battle against illegal narcotics and dangerous drugs. Between 1967 and 1968, there was a 64 percent increase in arrests for narcotics and marijuana. Half of those now being arrested for drug abuse are under 21 years of age.

The battle against narcotics is an integral part of the Administration's anti-street crime program. A narcotics addict may need \$70 or \$80 a day to satisfy his habit. Thus, he turns to robbery, mugging and burglary in order to obtain money. A reduction in addicts will result directly in the reduction of crime.

One of the most significant parts of the program so far has been a landmark proposal called the Controlled Dangerous Substances Act of 1969, which would consolidate and reorganize all the existing drug laws--some of which date back to 1914. It would expand federal authority to control not only narcotics and marijuana, but also many new drugs which come on the market. It would also substantially expand federal law enforcement power to search for illegal narcotics and to arrest suspected violators.

In addition, we have launched the first major search and seizure border operation in history aimed at stopping the importation of illegal drugs from Mexico.

It is estimated that the Mexican border traffic accounts for 80 percent of the illegal marijuana in this country, 20 percent of the heroin and large amounts of other dangerous drugs. So far this operation has been highly successful. We have evidence to indicate that Mexican marijuana is in very short supply in many areas of the country and that the price of Mexican marijuana, where available, has risen substantially.

We have also stepped up our narcotics enforcement program and we are in the process of training 22,000 state and local law enforcement officers to combat the local narcotics operations.

7. ORGANIZED CRIME

Another aspect of crime where the federal government has broad jurisdiction is organized crime.

Relying on the hopelessness of ghetto residents, organized criminals sell heroin and cocaine; playing on insecure credit, they loanshark the honest working man; recognizing elector indifference, they corrupt labor unions and political leaders.

The core of the federal effort against organized crime has been to reorganize the Strike Forces. They are interagency

teams designed to throw a whole net of federal law enforcement over an organized crime family in a particular city. We have expanded the number of these teams and we plan to reach 20 Strike Forces by the end of fiscal 1971.

In addition, we have set up an experimental federal-state racket squad in New York City. If this joint venture proves to be successful (and current activities indicate it will be), we plan to organize others in an effort to cooperate with state and local authorities in our Strike Force assault.

We have also asked for additional legislation to help us in the battle against the organized gangster.

Among the bills we have proposed or supported are laws designed to offer a broad immunity for many potential witnesses against organized crime; to expand our current ability to prosecute gambling; and to make it a federal crime to corrupt local police and other public officials.

In order to mount this broad attack on organized crime, the Administration has asked for a record \$25 million increase in funds for all government agencies involved in this effort--a 40 percent increase over the previous Administration request.

The result of our activities so far has been promising. A total of 71 organized crime figures were either indicted or convicted in the last fiscal year, as compared with only 48 the previous year.

Furthermore, we have arrested a number of crime figures who are members of the ruling commission of the organized crime syndicate in Buffalo, in Newark, in New Orleans, in Rhode Island and in Chicago. We think that this new assault shows great hope of success against this difficult problem.

8. CONCLUSION

This is just a brief outline of three of our major proposals, three which we believe are most promising.

This Administration has presented a great many other anti-crime proposals. They range from a comprehensive program for the capital City of Washington to some highly technical but very important legislation aimed at utilizing antitrust laws against organized crime.

We have also taken a number of important executive decisions. We have authorized court approved wiretapping against organized crime. We have authorized the admission in evidence of voluntary confessions complying with the guidelines approved by Congress. We have proposed pre-trial detention for dangerous suspects.

I know, and you know, that we must solve our crime problem. Economic prosperity and political stability have little meaning if our citizens are afraid to freely move about their neighborhoods. As this Administration's anti-crime program

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moves forward through Congress and into operation, the mood of the nation will change from cynicism to optimism and confidence in the law will be restored.

This Administration is committed to the success of its program. We are going to restore civil tranquility to the streets of this nation. We are going to restore confidence in elected governments' ability to act--and to act now.