



Department of Justice

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BY

THE HONORABLE WILLIAM B. SAXBE
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

AT

REGIONAL DIRECTORS' STAFF CONFERENCE
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

8:30 P.M.
THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 1974
CRYSTAL ROOM, OFFICERS' MESS, NAVY YARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

I appreciate the opportunity to be with you tonight.

Since becoming Attorney General nearly eight months ago, I have tried to meet with as many Department of Justice officials as possible.

One purpose of these meetings has been to let our key personnel know my views on a number of matters of urgent concern to all of us.

I also have been anxious to impress upon our officials that it is our career employees who are the key to achieving the high levels of efficiency that I know represent our common goal.

In the past few years, the reputation of the Department of Justice has been battered by some highly publicized events. I know that the vast majority of the Department's employees -- including employees of the Immigration and Naturalization Service -- are able, honest and dedicated. They deserve the public's confidence.

Whatever else I may do as Attorney General, I believe it is vital that full public confidence be restored in the Department of Justice.

The public must know beyond a shadow of a doubt that we are carrying out our manifold responsibilities -- and doing so with justice and fairness.

But beyond that, the public perceptions of the Department must be based on fact. We must also know -- by every reliable yardstick -- that we are upholding the law and carrying out the trust placed in us by the people and the Congress.

Honesty and efficiency cannot be a hobby or an avocation. Both must permeate everything that the Department of Justice undertakes -- to say nothing of the conduct of each employee.

I believe that the vast bulk of the Department's employees have high professional standards. It is one of my responsibilities to help foster an atmosphere that will raise those standards even more. But I have another obligation that goes much deeper, and that is to make certain that any allegations of wrongdoing by Department personnel are relentlessly pursued.

In that context, I would like to discuss with you this evening my deep concern over the continuing allegations of misconduct or illegal activities within the ranks of officials charged with enforcing federal laws along our borders.

As all of you know, a number of allegations of illegal acts by Immigration Service personnel, Customs Service personnel, and civilians led the Department to begin Operation Clean Sweep in 1972.

I recently directed the Deputy Attorney General to review and pursue Operation Clean Sweep quickly and vigorously. He is now doing so.

The Department of Justice has an abiding obligation to examine all possible violations of federal law, and we must be scrupulous in making certain that any and all suspicions about the Department itself are investigated meticulously.

In intensifying Operation Clean Sweep, I pledge that no resources and no manpower will be spared. In addition to the Deputy Attorney General's authority, I have directed that the Criminal Division of the Department and each United States Attorney in the relevant areas give these matters top level and continuing priority. Also I have instructed Director Kelley to personally oversee the Federal Bureau of Investigation's inquiry. In addition, the investigative resources of INS will be available.

Every possible violation of Federal law will be investigated thoroughly.

I wish to stress at this point that I have discussed this matter fully with General Chapman. He shares my concern and sense of urgency, and is in complete accord with my decision to track down every allegation -- once and for all.

I should add that this is also a matter of great interest to the House of Representatives and its Committee on Government Operations chaired by Congressman Chet Holifield and its Subcommittee on Legal and Monetary Affairs, chaired by his colleague, Congressman William Randall. We have cooperated in this effort with Congress in the past and will continue to work with Congress in the future. We will be reporting to Congressman Randall's Subcommittee next month on our progress in pursuing Operation Clean Sweep,

No one should underestimate the intensity of our concern or our determination to follow every conceivable twist of the investigative trails -- no matter where they may lead.

And to make my concern clear, I want to stress the following points.

All Immigration Service personnel are expected to cooperate fully in this investigation -- and all other Department of Justice personnel as well.

Any Department employee who fails to cooperate fully will be suspended immediately from his position, consistent with all of the safeguards and procedures to which any such employee is entitled.

There have been allegations of pressure being brought against potential witnesses to silence their testimony. We are not going to stand for any such effort to obstruct justice or thwart our new investigation.

Let me emphasize that any attempt to obstruct any aspect of the course of this investigation will be promptly and vigorously prosecuted.

No one can predict with any accuracy at this point what the results of the investigation may be. The facts will eventually speak for themselves. But every allegation and every suspicion will be fairly but vigorously investigated.

As I told you earlier, it is the obligation of the Department of Justice to fairly uphold the laws. And that obligation extends to all aspects of the Department itself.

I am convinced that the vast bulk of the Immigration Service's employees are honest and dedicated. But as I hope you will agree, the morale and the efficiency of the Service cannot be rebuilt until all allegations of possible corruption are investigated and the stain removed.

I am making this announcement to you tonight because I believe you have the greatest stake in the integrity of the INS and in the honor and dignity of federal law enforcement.

When you travel the long hard road of a professional law enforcement officer for the better part of your life, you deserve to hold your head up high on your retirement date and be proud of both your individual accomplishments and achievements and the record and reputation of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

In addition to what you and the Service deserve, the American people have the right to expect the highest caliber individual to carry out the sacred trust of enforcing federal law. Only if the man at the duty station carries out the law in a fair and honest manner will American citizens respect and trust the guardian of federal law. Our authority is a public trust and we have to earn that trust on a daily basis -- working as individuals.

No matter what the investigation may uncover, this step alone will not resolve all of the difficulties facing the Service.

Additional steps are needed to increase its ability to stop the large numbers of persons entering the country illegally -- and to remove those who already are here illegally.

While it is necessary to practice fiscal prudence, I believe that additional personnel for the Immigration Service are an absolute priority.

And I have said repeatedly -- and re-emphasize it tonight -- that new legislation is urgently needed which would make it a crime for an employer to knowingly hire an illegal alien.

In the short time he has been Commissioner, General Chapman already has launched a number of new and long-overdue improvement programs.

He does not believe -- and rightly so -- that a nationwide program can be operated solely from behind a desk in Washington.

During the past eight months, General Chapman has traveled more than 30,000 miles and has personally inspected a large number of facilities and procedures. In addition, he has met and talked with large numbers of personnel -- to get his views across to them and to receive theirs in return.

And he has coupled all of those things with new programs. One involves streamlined procedures to eliminate carelessness or misconduct in the handling of documents. Another has increased personnel for the Internal Investigations Unit of the Service. And above all, he is stressing the need for complete honesty and dedication.

I am convinced that the leadership of the Service is in very good hands, and we owe General Chapman genuine appreciation for his tireless work.

Among other things, he has stressed the rebuilding of morale. And that is very important -- for the Service can be rightly proud of its traditions.

From its small beginnings some 83 years ago, it has carried out difficult and often dangerous responsibilities. And today it has some 8,000 employees who strive -- often against great odds -- to perform work which has a significant impact upon the nation.

I know of your dedication to improve the Service. And I want to assure you that I also will do everything within my power to help strengthen it.

However, it seems to me that none of our progressive efforts stand much chance of lasting success until we eliminate once and for all the allegations of corruption.

I am certain this investigation will be successful -- and I am equally confident of your support and cooperation.

Thank you.