



Department of Justice

REMARKS

OF

DICK THORNBURGH
ATTORNEY GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES

FOLLOWING
HIS TAKING THE OATH
OF OFFICE

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12, 1988

Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, my good friend and distinguished Justice, Nino Scalia, family, friends and colleagues.

One month ago today, Mr. President, you announced your intention to nominate me to the high office of Attorney General of the United States. Today I undertake the duties of that office with pride and enthusiasm.

As many here know, I have spent much of the last year and a half with young people -- students, the next generation of American leaders. And, as you also know, Ginny and I have shared the wonderful experience of raising four fine sons of our own. I have, accordingly, acquired a special perspective on the priorities you and I share for Federal law enforcement, Mr. President.

For example, I firmly believe that unless we sustain a vigorous effort to make drug trafficking and drug abuse Public Enemy Number One, we could well stunt significantly the capacity of today's young people to contribute to a better quality of life for tomorrow's America.

I accept your challenge as well, Mr. President, to devote every resource of the Department of Justice, consistent with the strict observance of our citizens' civil rights and civil

liberties, and to use every constitutional process to fight other unique threats to our traditional values and institutions -- organized crime and racketeering, official corruption and white collar crime -- as well as to protecting the first civil right of every American: the right to be free from fear in our homes, on our streets and in our communities.

But, as you have often noted, Mr. President, government cannot offer the sole solution to these problems. Citizens have obligations, too.

Today I took my oath of office on a Bible once belonging to William Penn, the founder of my beloved Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I would commend to all Penn's reminder of the citizen's obligation in a free society. He observed:

"Justice is the insurance we have on our lives, and obedience is the premium we pay for it."

Not a bad message for this great nation, even today.

My thanks once again to you, Mr. President, and my thanks and Godspeed to all who have joined us for this most fulfilling occasion.

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