



Department of Justice

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ADDRESS

BY

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

BEFORE

THE OHIO FARM BUREAU

2:00 P.M.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1974

COLUMBUS, OHIO

It was very kind of you to invite me to be with you here today.

It is always a pleasure to come back home to Ohio. And I am particularly delighted to have a chance to meet again with my fellow members of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation.

Your concerns and those of the Department of Justice coincide in a number of areas.

One is the price of foodstuffs, and as you know the Department is now looking at a variety of such items to determine if there has been any violation of the antitrust laws.

One of our major areas of inquiry is whether there has been any illegal price-fixing.

It is not a new concern for the Department of Justice. In the past several years, a number of cases involving foodstuffs have been brought by the Department -- and a total of 14 such matters are now in various stages of litigation.

The cases include such foodstuffs as broiler chickens, dairy products, and bakery goods.

In addition, the Antitrust Division currently has a number of major investigations underway. Some are of long duration and others are fairly new. But they all involve the

possibility of serious violations in the food field on a national or regional basis.

One investigation concerns sugar, another the pricing and control of egg production. The Department also is looking at beef -- both the pricing behavior and structure of the market. In addition, attorneys are studying allegations that beef producers have been paid lower prices because of pricing agreements somewhere in the distribution chain.

I want to emphasize that I am not trying to pre-judge these cases. I am merely trying to show that we are firmly dedicated to strict but fair enforcement of all the laws -- including the antitrust statutes.

Price-fixing not only violates the law, but it also corrodes our free enterprise system and it hurts everyone eventually -- from the consumer to the businessman to the farmer.

Another priority area that we have in common is reduction of serious crime. Crime is on the increase again nationally, and I believe that national concern over crime is second only to national concern over the troubled state of the economy.

Part of that concern is reflected in the program I understand the Ohio Farm Bureau has undertaken to help develop more effective ways to reduce crime in rural areas.

Such efforts are particularly timely today -- for the sharpest increases in crime rates are now being felt in the nation's rural areas.

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reports for 1973 show that serious crime in rural areas increased 10 per cent -- while suburban crime rose nine per cent and crime in large cities by one per cent.

Rural areas have fewer crimes overall than either the large cities or the suburban areas -- but such a steep increase is a substantial cause for worry.

Crime must be attacked wherever it exists -- particularly the crimes of violence and those which hold the potential for violence. We must be alert to rapid increases in crime in any section of the country, and develop programs to combat them effectively.

One of the Justice Department's agencies, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, has funded some 50 special projects for rural crime prevention throughout the nation. One involved intensive efforts to prevent juvenile delinquency. Another set up special patrols to reduce burglaries and cattle thefts on farms and ranches.

But criminal justice agencies can only do so much by themselves. Responsible citizen support also is essential if we are to fashion lasting reductions in crime.

I am not suggesting that citizens assume the duties of law enforcement officials. But I do urge responsible citizen organizations to play a responsible role in assisting government at all levels to fashion a higher degree of public safety.

Of all the types of crimes the nation faces today, one of the most difficult to cope with is terrorism. And of all the types of terrorism, that which employs bombs is perhaps the most troublesome of all.

It is a problem that should be of concern to all Americans -- for bombings and terrorism pose not only dangers to individuals but a threat to our democratic system.

And it is a law enforcement problem of surprisingly large dimensions.

Figures compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation at its National Bomb Data Center show that nearly 2,000 bombing incidents were reported during 1973 -- and there were nearly 1,500 in the first nine months of this year.

The targets of the bombings and attempted bombings last year were amazingly diverse.

Nearly 600 involved homes and apartments. Nearly 500 more involved a variety of business and commercial

firms. There were more than 200 bombings of cars and trucks, and nearly 200 bombings or attempted bombings of schools. And there were nearly 100 such cases involving police or fire department facilities.

From those statistics, a pattern of danger begins to emerge. When homes and schools and business firms and public facilities are the targets of such attacks, it is apparent that silent and unseen perils exist for many.

I would like to explain to you what we in the Department of Justice are attempting to do about this problem, but I would also like to explore with you what I think you as citizens can do to battle all types of violent crime. But first I would like to discuss the scope of this facet of violence.

When we think of terrorism and bombings, the common impulse is to think of political radicals of either the far right or the far left taking this inhuman way to gain their own ends.

A number of bombings appear to be the work of such groups.

The Weather Underground, for instance, has claimed credit for a large number of bombings -- many of them of commercial facilities and business firms.

On the other side of the political spectrum, far right groups have either taken credit for, or been implicated in, bombings against the civil rights movement.

But terrorist activities range far beyond those organizations.

Let me just recount a few of the incidents of recent months and years.

In one section of West Virginia, there have been a number of incidents apparently related to a long dispute over textbooks in public schools. Several firebombs have been thrown at schools. And a satchel filled with 16 sticks of dynamite was recently found ominously close to two schools.

Earlier this year, a bomber repeatedly struck at transmission lines in Oregon which supply electrical energy to much of the Pacific Northwest and California. Three towers were destroyed and eight others were damaged. As public concern grew, a \$1 million extortion demand was received by authorities -- and arrests were later made in the case.

In the Southwest earlier this year, a man and his wife were killed by a dynamite bomb -- not long before he was to appear as a witness in a trial for attempted cattle theft.

A powerful bomb exploded at the Western Conference of Teamsters Building in Burlingame, California -- causing damage estimated at about \$200,000.

The dimensions of the bombing problem are far greater than commonly believed -- and involve far more groups than we might have thought possible.

The political terrorists -- in their inhuman and cowardly acts -- have rejected the rational course of trying to effect change through the democratic process, and have resorted to the barbarism of killing and maiming innocent people.

And in some cases, the perpetrators are people who normally are law-abiding and rational -- but lose their balance and judgment over an emotional issue.

Finally, there are a great many bombings that are carried out for profit or gain -- ranging from extortion to insurance claims to organized crime activities to driving competitors out of business.

All of these activities are one portion of a larger picture in this country -- a picture which shows on the part of many an increasing willingness to turn to illegal means to gain their objectives.

As you can see this is a law enforcement problem of substantial dimensions -- and it places heavy burdens on agencies at the local, state, and Federal levels.

The response of the Department of Justice has been to develop a program of many facets.

The FBI gives a high priority to bombing cases involving Federal law, and provides assistance to local police departments where state statutes have been violated.

In addition, its National Bomb Data Center disseminates a variety of technical information, and the FBI also trains a substantial number of local policemen.

LEAA created a program which has trained 1,400 bomb disposal technicians for 550 police departments since 1971. Before the program began, few of the departments had such specialists.

In addition, the Department supports stringent regulations that prevent explosives from being purchased easily -- and the point, of course, is to keep them from being purchased easily by criminals.

Since much of this problem of bombings and terrorism really is a state and local responsibility, every state should consider strict regulations on explosives.

Not all bombs are made of commercially manufactured explosives -- but many are, and states and localities should take prudent steps to guard against misuse. Prevention should be a major part of every crime reduction program.

And it seems to me that we must place an even higher priority on reduction of certain kinds of crimes -- the crimes of violence. In one sense, all violent crime is terrorist in nature. It not only claims specific victims but makes scores or even thousands or millions general victims by implanting a fear or terror of those crimes.

Too many of our people obviously have turned to crime. And too many of our law-abiding citizens have done too little over the years in fighting crime. Complaints and hand-wringing may be necessary -- but they won't get the job done.

For far too long adequate resources were denied to criminal justice agencies throughout the nation. And even today, many cities and counties are faced with personnel shortages in their police departments, their prosecutors' offices, and their courts and corrections agencies.

The bombing problem is one example of what I'm talking about. Hundreds of police departments have known they needed bomb disposal technicians. But most couldn't afford it until the Federal program was developed. Federal aid is very necessary -- but law enforcement at state and local levels should be able to do more for itself, should be given the needed resources.

The honest and dedicated criminal justice professionals at the state and local levels have long known what they needed to bring meaningful reductions in crime. But too often they have been faced with blunt rejections.

Those citizens and elected public officials who often complain the loudest about crime are often those who are first to urge pinching pennies in expenditures -- and short-changing law enforcement agencies on their needs.

Money and personnel are not the sole answers to crime problems -- but they certainly are essential ingredients in fashioning those answers.

If citizens want crime to be reduced in their cities and counties, there is a very easy way to start.

They can begin to inquire -- individually and through their responsible organizations -- about the real needs of their local criminal justice agencies. And then they can begin to work with those agencies to make certain that resources are available.

If your prosecutor really needs 10 more attorneys to give a priority to trying felony cases, then he should have them.

If your police department needs 100 more men -- and a new communications system to combat street crime and burglaries -- then it should have them.

And if your court needs more support personnel and a court manager and an automated docket system to reduce backlogs of felony cases, then it should have them.

It has often been said that the criminal justice system must become more responsive to citizen needs -- and that is true in a great many instances.

It is also true that citizens must develop and support programs that give criminal justice adequate levels of resources -- and at the same time provide a constant spur to do a better job.

Government at the state and local level is only as good as we are willing to make it -- and the same holds true of law enforcement.

We might not think it matters that much if we take an interest in the affairs of our city council or state legislature.

But each of us should reflect how many times each week or each month we think about, or worry about, crime problems of various kinds. And then the whole thing begins to assume a more accurate perspective.

Thank you.