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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF OF POLICE

6

(IACP) SUMMIT ON YOUTH VIOLENCE

7

APRIL 25, 1996

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Sheraton National

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900 Orme Street

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Arlington, Virginia 22201

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHIEF WALCHAK: Thank you very much,
3 ladies and gentlemen.

4 While the IACP, through this summit,
5 is working hard to reduce youth violence in
6 America, that violence is not our concern
7 alone.

8 Another voice, in particular, over
9 the past many years, has been strong and clear
10 about the need to focus on our nation's youth
11 if we are to reduce crime and improve the
12 fabric of our communities. And that voice has
13 been Janet Reno's.

14 While taking on the role of our
15 nation's chief law enforcement officer, she has
16 held a strong vision about the true nature of

17 crime and the complexities of solving crime
18 problems in our country.

19 In particular, she has championed a
20 systemic community based approach to reducing
21 crime and violence in our cities and towns.

22 I am particularly impressed with her

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1 recent work as chair of the Coordinating
2 Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency
3 Prevention.

4 As we do our work here, we will no
5 doubt benefit immensely from the insights
6 contained in the Council's March 1966 report on
7 combating violence and delinquency, The
8 National Juvenile Justice Action Plan.

9 And you can rest assured that any
10 good work we do here will have the enlightened
11 support of the Attorney General and her staff.
12 We only need to look back at last year's summit
13 to confirm that observation.

14 Once we had published our
15 recommendations on reducing murder and violent
16 crime, the Attorney General publicly supported
17 our work and complimented us on what she
18 considered an excellent approach to this most
19 complex problem.

20 And if that weren't sufficient,
21 through her encouragement and direction, the
22 Bureau of Justice assistance, as Laurie

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1 Robinson reported to us earlier --
2 is now providing grants of 400,000 apiece to
3 the cities of Richmond, California, and
4 Richmond, Virginia, to implement the very
5 recommendations contained in that report.

6 It is clear to IACP that the Attorney
7 General of the United States is tremendously
8 supportive of local law enforcement and the
9 work we do with community leaders through our
10 annual summits.

11 It is my great pleasure and honor to
12 introduce the Honorable Janet Reno, Attorney
13 General of the United States of America.

14 General, welcome.

15 (Applause)

16 ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Thank you,
17 Chief. It is a real privilege to be here
18 because I have been so impressed with IACP's
19 actions on so many different fronts in the
20 three years that I have been here in Washington
21 serving as Attorney General.

22 You make reference to your work on

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1 the murder summit. And I think that is a
2 classic example of good public policy,
3 hard-nose realism, and an action plan that I
4 think can make a difference.

5 It speaks volumes for the work that
6 your association is doing. It is an eloquent
7 testimony to what police chiefs and line

8 officers are doing around this country -- to
9 recognize the complexity of the fight against
10 crime, and to understand that it's not just
11 punishment, not just prevention, not just
12 policing, but that it is everybody coming
13 together.

14 You and the association set an
15 example for this whole country, and it is so
16 wonderful to be able to use those examples and
17 keep them coming.

18 It has been a real privilege for me,
19 for most of my adult life, to be able to work
20 with law enforcement. As some of you know, my
21 first summer job was in the Dade County
22 Sheriff's Office, and I never thought that I

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1 would follow through as I have. But from that
2 beginning, I have seen so many examples of
3 police officers in action.

4 As I travel around the country, in

5 these three years, I've watched police officers
6 put their lives on the line -- indeed, give
7 their lives. I've watched them work with young
8 people. I've watched them make arrests. I've
9 watched them testify.

10 And in all their duties and all their
11 functions, they are indeed on the front lines of
12 this country. They are committed. They have a
13 sense of public service. They have a sense of
14 making their community a better place.

15 It is infectious and exciting. And,
16 President Clinton and I are just committed to
17 doing everything we can to support the
18 magnificent law enforcement officers of this
19 nation and the great work that they are doing.

20 I think perhaps I'm preaching to the
21 choir. I think I could probably sit down and
22 then go home and you all would continue to do a

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1 wonderful job. I'm not sure that I have much

2 to add, because your approach is so, I think,
3 perfect.

4 But I would just like to summarize
5 the threads that I have seen over these last
6 years that I think are essential to addressing
7 the issue of youth violence.

8 I don't think I have to define the
9 problem. You know what it is, and that's the
10 reason you're here.

11 But where do we begin? I think,
12 clearly, we have got to start someplace, and
13 one place is to let our young people know that
14 they're going to be accountable.

15 Chief, a long time ago,
16
17 some of your officers came to me and
18 said, "Ms. Reno, we have to something about
19 these kids. They don't think anything is going to
20 happen to them in the juvenile justice system."

21 And we have got to fashion punishment
22 that's fair, firm, and fits the crime, that

1 people know that we mean business, know that
2 they will be held accountable, know that there
3 is no excuse for putting a gun up beside
4 somebody's head and hurting them.

5 But I think it is important for
6 police chiefs to continue to speak out beyond
7 the arena of the courtroom and into the
8 correction system and to support our
9 correctional officers who are doing such an
10 extraordinary job, oftentimes with very limited
11 resources, resources sufficient to deal with
12 violent, serious, youthful offenders.

13 We've got to let people know that we
14 need facilities for these youthful offenders.
15 Facilities that will provide security for the
16 community, facilities that will give them the
17 opportunity to complete educational
18 requirements, to develop job skills, and to
19 understand what it takes to live in a community
20 when they return.

21 We've got to let legislators and
22 others understand that you can't take a kid who

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1 has been neglected most of his life and send
2 him off to a program for six months, and think
3 you're going to change him so that he can go
4 back to the community and be law-abiding.

5 We have got to let those that fund
6 these systems understand that it won't work if
7 we keep them in a appropriate facility for a
8 year, or the appropriate length of time, and
9 then send them back to the community without
10 after-care, without follow-up, without support
11 mechanisms in the community.

12 And so I think all of us have got to
13 join together in reaching beyond the policing
14 function to the correctional function and
15 supporting the great efforts that are underway
16 there.

17 I am so proud of the work that police

18 communities have done across this country.
19 Community policing is exciting. It takes
20 different forms. It adjusts to different
21 communities. It adjusts to different
22 neighborhoods. And that's what it's all about.

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1 But there is something exciting
2 happening as a result of it. Police officers
3 are walking through the community with their
4 heads held high. They're walking through the
5 community as the ally of young people, as the
6 ally and partner of citizens who care. They
7 are the cutting edge, not of dividing
8 neighborhoods, but of bringing neighborhoods
9 together through policing, through caring,
10 through involvement.

11 And very recently, on a tragic day
12 that we learned of the crash in Bosnia, we were
13 prepared to have a program at the Department of
14 Justice on gangs and youth violence, and the

15 President was coming over.

16 One of the people that was there, a
17 young man who was going to introduce him, spent
18 a little time with me afterwards, after we had
19 to announce the tragedy. He was so touching.
20 He was so sensitive to the issues, and the
21 concerns, and the fears that we had.

22 But then he talked about the

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1 difference that that police officer had made in
2 his life. A lieutenant who was committed to
3 policing, committed to improving his community.

4 He had written out his remarks in
5 which he was going to introduce the President.
6 And I sent a copy to the President, and it is
7 an eloquent testimony of the greatness of
8 police officers who care.

9 I'd like to diverge a moment. This
10 past weekend, Chief Walchak and I were in
11 Budapest, Hungary, for the dedication of the

12 International Law Enforcement Academy.

13 You're reminded when you hear
14 ministers of justice and police officers, and
15 people in the streets talk about these emerging
16 democracies, of how exciting it is to be alive
17 now with democracy flourishing across the
18 world.

19 But that Friday, I was in Oklahoma
20 City at the service memorializing the one year
21 anniversary of that tragedy. There was a
22 different excitement. There was a strength, a

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1 courage, and a sense of accomplishment that
2 surrounded those victims and their survivors.

3 I get the same feeling from police
4 officers who are on the streets, who are making
5 a difference, who are reaching out and
6 involving citizens and caring.

7 And I just want to thank the officers
8 who do that day in and day out. They give us

9 all a sense of encouragement that we can make a
10 difference, that we can reduce violence, that
11 we can deal with the problem of youth crime in
12 this country.

13 I would like to suggest, then, as we
14 look at policing, as we look at the whole
15 problem of corrections, that you join with us,
16 with the States' Chief Justices in a pilot
17 project aimed at what I call "Community
18 Justice." Lori may have already spoken of it.

19 But just think of what we can do with
20 community police officers, a community court
21 situated in a high-crime area with significant
22 delinquency, community correctional officers,

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1 who are working with the community police
2 Officers in a joint effort in after-care
3 programs, involving the schools in a real
4 community justice pilot project.

5 I have spoken with the National

6 Conference of State Chief Justices, who want to
7 know how they can involve the courts. A number
8 of courts have tried to develop this concept of
9 community justice. And if we took community
10 policing, community justice, community
11 corrections and started to forge a real network
12 that affected high-crime areas, we might really
13 be able to make a difference. And so I look
14 forward to working with you, if you think well
15 of that idea.

16 I looked at
17 too many pre-sentence investigations of 16 and
18 17 year-olds, who I had just adjudicated as
19 delinquents. I could see steps along the way
20 for those children where we could have
21 intervened, to have made a difference in their
22 life, to have kept them away from delinquency,

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1 to have gotten them onto the straight and
2 narrow a long time ago.

3 I also realized then that we never
4 have enough dollars, particularly in times of
5 budget cuts, to save all those kids, if we
6 waited each time until they were adjudicated as
7 delinquent. We have to start earlier.

8 It is so exciting to see you
9 recognizing that by having teachers here, by
10 having community people here, by having young
11 people here.

12 Chief, it was one of the nicest
13 things to walk in and to see young people,
14 because they have so many good ideas about what
15 we can do. They're looking at it from a
16 common-sense perspective. And I also
17 discovered that they are not afraid to speak
18 out.

19 But if we can pursue the concept of
20 community justice, think of what we can do.
21 And what so many of your communities are doing
22 as they use community policing for the

1 foundation of reaching out to the schools.

2 Another valuable resource are Parks
3 and Recreation professionals, the National
4 Association of Parks and Recreation
5 professionals, is looking at children at risk
6 as one of its major initiatives.

7 Think of what we can do if police
8 officers regularly link with Parks and
9 Recreation specialists, who are trained in
10 addressing this issue. Again, these links can
11 make such an extraordinary difference and,
12 then, if the schools link with the parks, link
13 with the business community.

14 I've been to Harry Shorenstein's
15 community, to Fort Caroline
16 Elementary, and had the opportunity to see the
17 business community as part and parcel of crime
18 prevention program within the school itself.

19 It's going back to people and making
20 people believe that they can make a difference

21 in their neighborhood by reaching out and
22 saying, "It's not just my problem, it's not

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1 just a police problem, it's everybody's
2 problem." And I think, working together, we
3 can do that.

4 Think of what we can do if Chief
5 Burger develops -- and maybe he already has --
6 a truancy prevention program, in North Miami
7 Beach, but not just a program that picks up the
8 child and takes them back to the school.
9 Because the school, if it has no other
10 resources, will call home.

11 A mother may come get her child. But
12 if she doesn't, too often the public school
13 system will send the child home on the bus that
14 afternoon, not recognizing that that mother may
15 be falling into the abyss of a cocaine
16 addiction, right at that moment, that we could
17 pull her out of real quickly, if we could get

18 involved up front before it was too late.

19 What if we developed teams with
20 community police officers, school personnel,
21 and youth counselors, or public health nurses,
22 that can go together as a team, knock on the

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1 door, and find out where that mother is, and
2 why that child was truant, and why no one came
3 to school to pick up that truant child.

4 Why not then provide intervention?
5 Not in terms of forced intervention if we do
6 not have adequate claim for jurisdiction, but
7 in terms of persuasive intervention that will
8 convey to the person and the family at risk
9 that we can make a difference and keep them
10 from that brink of disaster.

11 I have seen teams of community police
12 officers working with others in making such an
13 extraordinary difference.

14 If we can send people to the moon, if

15 we can teach people to read, to write, to do
16 basic arithmetic, if we can teach them about
17 computers -- which I still have a lot learn
18 about -- surely, we can teach people how to
19 resolve conflicts without knives, and guns, and
20 fists.

21 So much is being done in terms of
22 conflict resolution. As you approach it in

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1 your community, I urge you to make sure that is
2 evaluated. The reports that I get back are
3 that many programs are put together with little
4 thought and little concern for just how
5 effective they are.

6 But well-planned programs that are
7 properly evaluated and adjusted as indicators
8 suggest would be appropriate and can truly make a
9 difference. The Department of Justice
10 would look forward to working with you in that
11 area.

12 I hope that there will be monies, as
13 a result of the budget accord that was reached
14 today, that communities will use their
15 block grant money for crime prevention programs,
and
16 consider afternoon and evening programs.

17 Wherever I go, young people who have
18 been in trouble or who are in trouble, when I
19 ask them, "What could be done to prevent the
20 trouble in the first place?" they say,
21 "Something to do in the afternoons and in the
22 evenings, not just sports, but constructive

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1 activities that can keep me out of trouble."

2 Let's make sure that we do everything
3 we can to see that those programs are funded.

4 Let us encourage volunteers who can
5 become involved, and who can make that
6 difference, as well.

7 But another point is children that I
8 talk to, who have been in trouble, also say, "I

9 need somebody to talk to, somebody who
10 understands how hard it is to grow up in this
11 country today, somebody that give me a pat on
12 the back when I deserve it, but a swift
13 talking-to when I deserve that as well."

14 Oftentimes, it's the community police
15 officer that's fulfilling that function. But
16 we need more mentors, through boys' and girls'
17 clubs -- Big Brothers, Big Sisters -- making
18 sure that there is no child that does have an
19 adult who can listen, and who can advise.

20 And as we consider how we reweave the
21 fabric of society around our children and
22 families at risk, I think it is important that

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1 we focus on mentoring as well.

2 One area I'm so proud of police
3 involvement in is the whole issue of domestic
4 violence. In 1978, it was very difficult to
5 get police chiefs interested in domestic

6 violence. And now, wherever I go, whether it
7 be Iowa, Maine, or the Kentucky Legislature,
8 people are saying that domestic violence and
9 family violence is one of the major problems in
10 their community or in their state.

11 The Violence Against Women Act is
12 providing monies to states. We've made a down
13 payment of \$426,000 to each state. And that
14 will be enhanced, I hope, with the budget
15 accorded, as it evolves in this day.

16 The American Psychological
17 Association, in a superb report, makes clear
18 that violence is a learned behavior. And one
19 of the best schools for learning violence is in
20 the home. Unless we do something about
21 violence in the home, we are never going to
22 eliminate it on the streets or in the schools

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1 of America.

2 Think of what we can do if we develop

3 teams of police officers sensitive to the
4 issues of domestic violence, trained in how to
5 respond to them, working with counselors,
6 working with the domestic violence center that
7 can provide procedures for TROs and one-stop
8 shopping, if you will.

9 Courts, with Judges, who are
10 sensitive to and understanding of what is
11 necessary in terms of judicial action to deal
12 with the problem.

13 We can make a difference, people tell
14 me. But it takes money. I would like to
15 translate it. If we can intervene effectively
16 in the cycle of violence so that your officers
17 don't have to respond once, twice, three times
18 to the same jurisdiction in a six-week period,
19 and have that person incarcerated and go
20 through the system, and back in, and back out.

21 But if we can intervene once, we're
22 going to be saving money in the long run. If

1 we can adjust prosecutor and court schedules so
2 that we have people in one group that can focus
3 on this issue, because they have the training
4 and sensitivity, we're going to save money.
5 It's just a reallocation of resources.

6 But, finally, one area that I hope
7 you don't neglect, because I'm still -- and
8 nothing in the three years that I've heard,
9 since I came to Washington, has given me any
10 reason to indicate -- as a matter of fact,
11 nobody has ever denied it, refuted it, or
12 disagreed with me -- all that we do, after a
13 child is in school, won't make any difference
14 unless, for a number of children, we start
15 early when they're first born.

16 Developing parenting programs that
17 can provide strong, effective parenting,
18 child-support enforcement mechanisms that can
19 provide effective child support for all our
20 children in this country, early childhood care

21 that can provide the supervision, the structure
22 that will enable those children to grow as

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1 strong, effective human beings.

2 Some of you have heard my experience,
3 in Miami when I was taken to Jackson Memorial
4 Hospital to try to figure out what to do about
5 crack-involved infants and their mothers.

6 The doctors then told me -- and every
7 child development expert has confirmed -- that
8 the first three years of life are the most
9 formative, that that is when the child learns
10 the concept of reward and punishment and
11 develops a conscience.

12 What will all the police, all the
13 correctional officers, all the jails be worth
14 18 years from now unless the child develops a
15 conscience and learns the concept of
16 punishment?

17 What good will all the schooling be

18 if they don't have the foundation upon which to
19 build and to develop the skills that will
20 enable them to earn a living wage and keep out
21 of trouble?

22 As we look at the whole picture of

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1 youth violence, we've got to realize that what
2 we are, in effect, doing is trying to develop
3 mechanisms that will enable parents to do a
4 good job of the single most difficult job in
5 the world, which is to raise children.

6 Police officers are on the front
7 line, doing that in so many different ways,
8 formally and informally, every day of the year.

9 And your effort here today is just,
10 to me, one of the most encouraging and hopeful
11 signs that I see. And I can't wait for the
12 report. I'll be there.

13 (Applause)

14 CHIEF WALCHAK: General, thank you

15 very much for helping get us on the right path
16 in this very important program.

17 We appreciate your thoughts. Your
18 continued support is certainly evidenced by
19 your taking so much time out of your busy
20 schedule to be with us this morning.

21 And thank you again so very much. We
22 know you have to leave. Thank you on behalf of

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1 all of us. And we will get you the report.

2 (Applause)

3 (Whereupon, at approximately
4 10:45 a.m., Attorney General
5 Reno departed the summit.)

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