



Department of Justice

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STATEMENT

by

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAMSEY CLARK

before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE REORGANIZATION
of the
HOUSE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

on

Reorganization Plan No. 1

March 20, 1968

Before the committee is a measure of immediate and substantial importance to the efficacy of federal law enforcement. The expanding use of narcotics and dangerous drugs is a clear and present danger to the public safety. Narcotics and dangerous drugs are a major source of crime. They are in some parts of the nation the chief problem faced by law enforcement.

Federal resources must be adequate to meet federal responsibility in this vital area. President Johnson seeks a 30 percent increase in manpower. Federal organization and technique must provide a model for state and local law enforcement. Coordination among local, state and federal agencies must be effective and efficient. Federal enforcement must itself be effective and efficient. Approval of Reorganization Plan No. 1 is essential to these accomplishments.

Narcotics provide a principal source of income to organized crime. Addiction afflicts every segment of our population, begetting crime. Dangerous drugs are trafficked by criminal elements. Forty percent of the persons arrested by Bureau of Drug Abuse Control agents have criminal records. Sixteen percent are armed when arrested. The control of narcotics and dangerous drugs is a major element in crime control.

The Bureau of Narcotics, under the outstanding leadership of such men as Harry J. Anslinger and Henry L. Giordano, has established a distinguished record of public service. The long history of the Bureau of Narcotics is marked by skillful handling of difficult and dangerous assignments. The Bureau of Drug Abuse Control, under the able leadership of John Finlator, has been characterized during its short history by vitality and ingenuity in meeting the difficult and changing enforcement problems created by dangerous drugs.

But the effectiveness and efficiency of these Bureaus is limited by their separation, for the challenge of narcotics and dangerous drugs requires a single enforcement center. The present fragmentation of federal responsibility has clearly hindered our response to the challenge. President Johnson has noted that more than nine out of ten seizures of LSD made by the Bureau of Drug Abuse Control have also turned up marihuana, but that Bureau has no jurisdiction over marihuana. Clearly, drugs presently divided into different bureaucratic categories are part of the same problem.

Federal educational and scientific efforts in the drug area are also complicated by the fragmentation. Both Bureaus conduct research, law enforcement training and public education concerning drugs in their area of responsibility. Both will be better served by consolidation.

Together, the agencies would form the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs in the Department of Justice.

A basis for assigning the Department of Justice the responsibility of enforcing drug laws was recognized in 1949 by the Hoover Commission, which recommended transfer of the Bureau of Narcotics to the Department. The Commission pointed out that "duplication could be eliminated and economy achieved" by the transfer. The more important achievements in effective enforcement provide an even stronger base.

The Department of Justice is, of course, the federal agency whose primary concern is crime control. Drugs and narcotics are inextricably interwoven into the fabric of crime in America. The Department is charged with detecting and prosecuting violations of federal law. These critically important cases of highest priority require the coordination promised by the reorganization.

Another observation of the Hoover Commission was that the transfer would facilitate law enforcement by providing "a

single channel of contact with State and local authorities" in criminal matters that may or may not involve drug violations.

A good reason in 1949, it is even better today. For the Department of Justice today is forging stronger and closer links with state and local agencies of criminal justice.

The reorganization, together with a manpower increase and new criminal laws, would vastly enlarge the federal government's ability to arrest the growing peril of narcotics and dangerous drugs.

Federal law enforcement will be strengthened. Work with state and local governments and with other nations will be simplified and expanded. Contacts with the educational, scientific and sociological communities will be more meaningful with unification. Extensive research will be conducted. Public education efforts can be intensified.

I urge your support of this reorganization. It is important to our safety as to our health.