



Department of Justice

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ADDRESS

OF

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

BEFORE

THE ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOON

THURSDAY, MAY 30, 1974
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ROOM
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

I appreciate very much your invitation to be with you here today.

My staff told me recently that it is the custom of the Administrative Conference to invite each new Attorney General to speak briefly at one of your semi-annual meetings.

It must have been quite a job keeping track of whom you would invite this past year.

In my few months as Attorney General, I have become convinced that one key to the Department of Justice carrying out its responsibilities is the development of better working relationships with a variety of Federal and State agencies.

The Administrative Conference and the Department have cooperated closely in a number of important areas, going back to your formation.

I hope we can continue this cooperation -- and enhance it.

Among other things, the Conference has been of great assistance to the Department in matters relating to the Freedom of Information Act. The Department in turn has given its full assistance to a number of your projects.

These joint efforts not only enable us to handle individual tasks with greater dispatch and efficiency. They also serve in the aggregate to better fulfill our obligations to the achievement of orderly progress under our system of laws and administrative procedures.

In some areas, we are going along parallel tracks that bode well for increased levels of performance in the future.

I was very interested to read, for instance, of your new program to develop in-depth statistics on formal administrative proceedings throughout the Executive Branch.

The Department of Justice is now developing a number of new statistical programs designed to produce reliable data on the criminal justice system -- much of it for the first time.

I also want to tell you today of a new program that I have directed to be set up by the Department of Justice to better serve its clients in the Cabinet Departments and Independent Agencies.

It has been apparent for some time that there is a substantial need for closer working relationships, and I first discussed the matter with the General Counsels of the Federal government at a meeting in late April.

Today, I am sending a letter to all Cabinet members and heads of agencies telling them that new, formal procedures have now been worked out.

The Assistant Attorneys General who head our litigating divisions are in the process of contacting General Counsels and explaining how these procedures will be set in motion.

In brief, cases which the General Counsels feel have special significance will get special handling. In some instances, there may be expedited action by the Department, and in others we may be able to devote greater resources on particular matters.

Our procedures will be flexible and designed to be of maximum service. At the same time, we want the views of the General Counsels, not only on these initial steps, but on other procedural improvements that might be warranted in the future.

New levels of cooperation will enable all of us to do a better job for our ultimate client--the public. And that is of particular importance today.

We have all read a great deal about the many signs that confidence in government has become eroded in one way or another.

There also has been ample evidence that much of the public dismay over the conduct of its business is justified.

Part of that evidence stems from the long roster of Local, State, and Federal officials who have been convicted of criminal offenses while holding office or positions of high trust. Many of these persons have been lawyers.

Public trust is essential to the proper functioning of government at all levels. And trust must be more than a perception -- it must be based on hard reality.

In my brief time as Attorney General, I have been impressed at how well the Department of Justice is operating, considering the buffeting it has taken in the past two years.

Its ability to carry out its enormous responsibilities has not been impaired. Events have caused no mortal wound to either its morale or its determination.

I am certain that the Department will continue to work at the very peak of its finest traditions.

We have set into motion a series of programs designed to develop even greater efficiency. Particular emphasis is being placed on training to upgrade the skills of our attorneys, particularly those in the United States Attorneys Offices.

Progress often does not take place overnight. In many instances, it is like building a coral reef -- a slow but measured process that depends on how well each of us does his work, day in and day out.

This kind of sober dedication to the public trust is what is expected of us -- not 95 percent each day, but 100 percent.

This is particularly true for those of us whose lives are devoted to the law. If trust has waned in government, it may have dipped even more as far as the legal profession is concerned.

No matter what our particular areas of work may be, it is essential that today -- as at no other time in our history -- that we carry out everything inherent in our system of law.

Again, let me thank you for inviting me here today. And please be assured that we in the Department will continue to do everything we can to cooperate on efforts that will enable us all to achieve needed progress.