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BEFORE THE UNITED STATES BORDER PATROL

San Diego, California

Saturday, October 14, 1995

Speech of U.S. Attorney General Janet
Reno, taken at the United States Federal Building,
880 Front Street, Second Floor, San Diego,
California, at 11:48 a.m., on Saturday, October 14,
1995, and the proceedings being taken down by
Stenotype by ANELA H. WOMACK, and transcribed under
her, direction.

P R O C E E D I N G S

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2 U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I really
3 appreciate, Commissioner Meisner, and all of the
4 leaders of the Border Patrol and Mr. Reid and
5 Mr. Bersin, the briefing that I have had today.

6 Sheriff, thank you for talking about the
7 men and women in green. I've had an opportunity to
8 ride with the Border Patrol to walk the border with
9 them.

10 I am so terribly proud of the job that the
11 Border Patrol has done in these past years to
12 protect our border, and in this past year, to make
13 this sector far more difficult to cross than it has
14 been in its history.

15 I've had an opportunity this morning to
16 hear from the men and women at the Brownfield
17 station at their 7:00 o'clock muster. They do such
18 an incredible job, and I think it reflects so on
19 the Border Patrol. And we owe them a debt of
20 gratitude for the great work they do on behalf of
21 the American people.

22 Last night, I went to the San Ysidro port
23 of entry. I had a chance to talk with port
24 inspectors who work six days a week to keep that
25 port open to make it more effective. I heard from

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1 dedicated men and women who are giving so much of
2 their lives to making that border effective; to
3 making that port effective; to making that port a
4 gateway for commerce that can affect this whole
5 region and do everything they can to stem illegal
6 immigration, while, at the same time, encouraging
7 legal commerce and legal migration, and they have
8 done an incredible job, Mr. Reid.

9 It has been so much fun to hear from state
10 and local enforcement because my dream is to have a
11 partnership across all America such as you have
12 here in San Diego; such as you all have worked so
13 hard to build. We have so much to do, to see
14 sheriffs and police chiefs, local prosecutors and
15 the United States Attorney, Federal and State
16 agencies, come together. I will carry the message
17 back to Washington, and I will carry it around the
18 United States. You are an example of what can be
19 done when people work together.

20 And this morning, at Brownfield, I had an
21 opportunity to hear from the private sector. And
22 I've been so impressed, Alan, as to how you had the
23 opportunity to involve them together. We are doing
24 so much to make this border far more difficult to
25 cross; to encourage legal migration to make the

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1 port of entry effective; to stem the tide of alien
2 smuggling, and to focus not just on alien smuggling
3 and drug smuggling and other aspects of this whole
4 criminal effort that comes together. But we are
5 not satisfied, and we have much to do. And based
6 on my review of Gatekeeper to date, based on my
7 conversations of these last days, I would like to
8 make clear that we are moving forward, and I would
9 like to describe some of the steps that we are
10 undertaking in this effort.

11 Commissioner Meisner and I have decided
12 that to really fight to secure our Southwest border
13 against illegal migration, against alien and drug
14 smuggling, against the problems that so impairs the
15 wonderful communities that live around the border,
16 unless effective action is taken, that we'd have to
17 have one person coordinating the activities of all
18 of the Justice Department agencies. We need one
19 person who believes in bold and innovated ideas,
20 who demands urgent action and helps focus the
21 attention of everyone on what we need to get done.
22 We need to bring all of the agencies together in an
23 increasingly effective effort, focusing on how we
24 can root out the illegal activities along the
25 Southwest border.

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1 We need someone who knows the issues who's
2 worked with Federal, State and local law
3 enforcement. We need someone who can work with the
4 private sector. We need someone who understands
5 the marvels of what technology can do to assist the
6 dedicated agents in doing their job, and we need
7 someone who will implement a tough new enforcement,
8 and who also understands how incredibly important
9 it is to protect the civil rights of every single
10 person along the way.

11 Today, I am appointing United States
12 Attorney Alan Bersin as my personal special
13 representative for the Southwest border, U.S.
14 Attorney for the Southern District of California.

15 Alan has developed the tough new
16 prosecution programs that you have heard about
17 today. He's made it his business to know the
18 detail workings of the Border Patrol, INS and the
19 custom services, and the other law enforcement
20 agents working along the border, to get to know
21 their inner-workings so they can be supportive and
22 assist them and back them up in their efforts.

23 He's worked with the Border Patrol agents
24 monitoring Gatekeeper's affects on smuggling
25 activities. He's surveyed the border facilities

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1 during peak hours with inspections to help design
2 the port of entry legal program.

3 He's worked with Federal and local
4 agencies to put force behind our laws. He has
5 headed an effort, as you have heard this hour, in
6 Imperial County, and has earned the respect of all
7 concerned.

8 In short, he's helped us move farther and
9 faster in our efforts to curb illegal activities in
10 California, and now he will help us with the entire
11 border, and it has been so encouraging to me, as
12 you suggested this, to hear from all of the
13 agencies concerned; to hear from state and local
14 officials. How encouraged they are by this step we
15 are taking, and it's a great attribute to you and I
16 thank you for your willingness to undertake this
17 activity.

18 Second, I am announcing today that we will
19 begin a new policy aimed at phony document users
20 and criminal aliens. We will detain aliens caught
21 using phony documents at our land border ports of
22 entry and criminal aliens who try to enter the U.S.
23 after having been deported. We've had a
24 three-month pilot of our port court. That pilot
25 has sent back home more than 2,000 aliens

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1 attempting to cross illegally. It has proven
2 effective, even while operating out of temporary
3 space with borrowed immigration judges. We will
4 make the port court permanent and construct a new
5 courtroom with the Otay Mesa entry with two judges
6 assigned to hear these cases.

7 I am also committed to do everything I can
8 to giving the people who are working so diligently
9 and all Americans on the port of entry the
10 resources and the additional work they need to do
11 the job.

12 To further support these initiatives, we
13 are obtaining additional detention space to hold
14 the aliens. Subject to port court proceedings, INS
15 will obtain additional local jail space to house
16 non-violent illegal aliens awaiting Federal
17 prosecution.

18 We have arranged to lease space at the
19 Naval Air Station at Miramar for eighteen months
20 while we work on plans to accommodate our increased
21 detention needs for the long-term.

22 I have instructed my staff to work with
23 the sheriff, with other officials from San Diego,
24 to help develop plans for long-term detention
25 options, including construction of a joint

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1 Federal/County facility, on an unprecedented
2 proposal. And, Sheriff, again, we thank you for
3 your leadership.

4 Third, I'm going to the East County this
5 afternoon. I've flown over that area before. But
6 when on planning for what I was to do when I came
7 out here, I said I want to see the East County
8 because we want to focus not just on one part of
9 the border, we want to focus on the whole part. We
10 want to understand the effect of agencies in one
11 place and what it has on the other. So I will be
12 going out there because I am determined and
13 committed to making sure that we consider the
14 border as a whole in our enforcement strategy.

15 We will immediately increase the Border
16 Patrol's strength on the line in the San Diego
17 sector by the equivalent of 143 agencies, by
18 detailing agents from around the country and
19 increasing overtime assignments to those already in
20 San Diego.

21 These agents will help address the growing
22 pressures in East County for Imperial Beach, and
23 heighten control across the entire San Diego
24 sector.

25 Enhanced agent strength will serve as an

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1 interim measure until January 1996 when 143
2 recruits, currently at the Border Patrol Academy,
3 have completed their training and arrive here.

4 Finally, we will increase our efforts to
5 take away the magnet that motivates people to come
6 here illegally. Jobs.

7 In the past year, we have launched
8 numerous efforts to ensure that people working in
9 the United States are legally authorized to do so.
10 Within the next month, we will announce new plans
11 to expand the enforcement of these laws in Southern
12 California. New coordination for the entire
13 Southwest border, a new innovated port court,
14 additional detention beds, more Border Patrol
15 agents, increased emphasis to support the port of
16 entry. These are the tools that will bring
17 Operation Gatekeeper into another splendid year.
18 Beginning here in San Diego, we are creating a
19 seamless web of enforcement from the border to the
20 workplace.

21 As I said a year ago, this Administration
22 is committed to the success of Operation Gatekeeper
23 and the aggressive enforcement of our immigration
24 laws. We will not rest until the flow of illegal
25 immigration across the Southwest border has

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1 abated.

2 When President Clinton announced two years
3 ago that securing the Nation's borders will be a
4 top priority in his Administration, his charge to
5 us was very, very clear. We must control illegal
6 immigration. We will not let up on our commitment
7 to do that.

8 We must restore the integrity of our
9 borders to preserve our proud history of legal
10 immigration. I will return to Washington, and I
11 will bring your report on Operation Gatekeeper to
12 President Clinton.

13 On behalf of the President, I'd like to
14 thank you, all the agents of the Border Patrol, the
15 port inspectors, the port personnel that I've had
16 the opportunity to meet, state and local law
17 enforcement officers, who are on the front line day
18 in and day out, I'd like to thank you all for your
19 commitment to ensuring justice and safety for this
20 Nation.

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1 STATE OF CALIFORNIA }
2 COUNTY OF ORANGE } ss.
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4 I, ANELA H. WOMACK, a Certified Shorthand
5 Reporter No. 9128 in the State of California, duly
6 empowered to administer oaths, certify:

7 That the proceeding was taken before me at
8 the time and place therein set forth and was taken
9 down by me in shorthand and thereafter transcribed
10 under my direction and supervision, and I hereby
11 certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and
12 correct transcript of my shorthand notes so taken.

13 I further certify that I am neither
14 counsel for nor related to any party to said action
15 nor in any way interested in the outcome thereof.

16
17 Anela H. Womack
18

19 Date: 10/18/95
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