
A MESSAGE FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

On September 11, 2001, evil assaulted America. Those heinous acts of violence and the continuing threat of impending violence are an attack on America and her citizens. The fight against terrorism is now the first and overriding priority of the Department of Justice. We will devote all resources necessary to disrupt, weaken, and eliminate the infrastructure of terrorist organizations, to prevent or thwart terrorist attacks, and to bring to justice the perpetrators of terrorist acts.

Our single objective is to prevent terrorist attacks by taking suspected terrorists off the street. We will use every available statute. We will seek every prosecutorial advantage. We will use all our weapons within the law and under the Constitution to protect life and enhance security for America. We will not hesitate in this pursuit, nor will we be thwarted.

The Department of Justice's Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2001 - 2006 reaffirms the Department's commitment and responsibility to protect all Americans, their loved ones, and their possessions, and to enforce vigorously the laws of the United States. The Plan seeks to maintain the balance between personal safety and personal freedom, between strict enforcement and abiding respect for individuals.

The Plan describes how the Department will uphold the American justice tradition that battles injustice to bring protection to the weak, freedom to the restrained, liberty to the oppressed, and security to all. The plan addresses the major obstacles to these freedoms, including: the threat of terrorist acts, violence, illegal drugs, illegal use of guns, discrimination, and exploitation. The Department of Justice is committed to combating aggressively these and other injustices, striving to prevent their occurrence, and, when they cannot be prevented, to prosecute their perpetrators.

The Plan describes the Department's commitment to:

Protect Americans and their institutions against the threat of terrorism through prevention of terrorist acts, and the investigation and prosecution of threats and incidents;

Keep America safe by enforcing our Nation's laws, especially reducing the incidence of gun violence and the trafficking of illegal drugs;

Protect our children and those most vulnerable from violence and exploitation;

Assist state, tribal, and local law enforcement agencies in combating crime through cooperative efforts and the effective use of grants for community-based initiatives designed to reduce crime and violence;

Reduce racial discrimination and uphold the civil rights of all Americans, especially as they relate to racial profiling and voting rights;

Combat economic crime, particularly cybercrime, whose threat increases as technology advances;

Provide effective, accurate and courteous service to those who seek to enter our Nation lawfully, while securing aggressively our borders against those who would seek to pose harm to America or its interests; and

Ensure the safety and integrity of the judicial process, and provide for the safe, secure, and humane confinement of criminals.

We will accomplish these objectives by developing a workforce that is well-trained and professional; by strengthening financial systems that ensure the effective and efficient use of taxpayer dollars; and by improving the integrity and security of computer systems, while making more effective use of information technology.

The men and women of justice and law enforcement have been asked to shoulder a great burden for the safety and security of the American people. We will not rest in this pursuit. We will, as we have in the past, never waiver in our faith and loyalty to the Constitution and never tire in our defense of the rights it enshrines.

John Ashcroft