



# Department of Justice

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ADDRESS

BY

THE HONORABLE GRIFFIN B. BELL  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

BEFORE

THE ANNUAL JUDICIAL CONFERENCE

OF

THE U.S. COURT OF CUSTOMS AND PATENT APPEALS

12:00  
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 1977  
SHERATON HALL BALLROOM  
SHERATON-PARK HOTEL  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

When I became Attorney General 112 days ago, I said that we would try to do our work well. I want to mention now some of the efforts we have started and other matters we are considering.

The first major problem that confronted me was whether the Justice Department could be managed. It was not a frivolous question. The Department is not merely a large law firm.

It has 54,000 employees and an incredible range of responsibilities. These responsibilities include criminal enforcement, national security, narcotics, prisons, large grant programs, undocumented aliens, and more.

After a preliminary study, I decided that the Department could be managed, if we moved in the right direction. We needed a new structure, and a general reorganization has now taken place. Its main feature gives us, in effect, two Deputy Attorneys General instead of one, so there can be much closer supervision of all activities.

There are many aspects to competent management. We have to recruit and retain top-flight personnel. All of us who are new to the Department must master a number of complex new subjects. The intelligence and national security areas are particularly time-consuming.

At the same time, I am currently faced with a rather unusual management problem. It involves the leaks of information concerning the allegations of wrongdoing by FBI personnel.

Leaks regarding investigations and pending cases are unethical and inexcusable. It is doubly shocking that the leaks should apparently come from attorneys or other Department personnel who are sworn to uphold the law, not to abuse it.

The question is very simple. As Attorney General, it is my responsibility to manage the Department. Those doing the leaking are trying to manage me and channel the course of the investigation through their leaks.

They will not succeed. The law, fairness, and ethical standards will be upheld in this investigation and all the others we undertake. There will be no exceptions.

In addition to new management efforts, a number of programs and studies have been started during the past 112 days.

Every division, office, and agency in the Department is creating a detailed plan for the next two years. It includes clear cut objectives and a time-table for achieving them.

We are already deeply involved in efforts to improve the fight against narcotics. Among other things, we are studying whether the Drug Enforcement Administration should be converted into a division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Another intensive study concerns how to improve the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, which provides criminal justice funds to state and local governments.

The Department's legal divisions have embarked on a number of important projects to improve enforcement and litigation capabilities. The Criminal Division is taking a major new

look at organized crime. The Antitrust Division's agenda includes shared monopolies, energy, and international antitrust matters. Privacy Act problems are under review by the Civil Division. And the Land and Natural Resources Division is looking at the complexities of Indian land claims.

The rising tide of undocumented aliens entering the country is a major concern. Among other initiatives, we are developing what I hope will be more effective enforcement programs for the Immigration Service.

Aside from specific projects, my overall feeling is that the Department has three major areas of responsibility: To detect and prosecute crime; to defend the government in civil cases; and to oversee certain intelligence activities.

Some of the Department's current functions may not be appropriate parts of its overall mission. I am currently considering whether to recommend that some of those functions be shifted elsewhere.

During the past 16 weeks, we have been actively involved in several pieces of major new legislation.

After becoming Attorney General, I set up a task force to study revision of the Federal criminal code. I decided that we should support revision, after deletion of a few controversial items in the old Senate Bill 1. We made some contributions which I hope were significant to the new bill recently introduced by Senators McClellan and Kennedy.

Legislation is now being prepared to regulate electronic surveillance in the foreign intelligence area properly. Equally important, we are preparing a charter for the FBI.

Judicial problems are of great concern to me. One of my first acts was to establish the Office for Improvements in the Administration of Justice and to select Professor Daniel Meador to head it. The Office's projects include bills to expand the duties of Federal magistrates and to create a Federal arbitration system for certain types of cases.

These are just some of the activities that have occupied me in the past 112 days. And no matter how beneficial new programs or proposals may appear to be, nothing we do in the Department can be of lasting value unless three great principles are followed.

First, all of the Department's personnel must be totally honest and ethical in everything we do.

Second, total fairness must be an integral part of every official activity -- administrative, investigative, legal.

Finally, the Department must be as open as it possibly can be, within the constraints of fairness and national security. We must let the public know what we are doing and why, and we feel that if this is accomplished, public confidence in our governing abilities will follow.

The Justice Department must do a better job than it has ever done in the past. But we cannot do the job alone. We need support and assistance from the public and from a variety of

legal and professional groups. We need all the help that you and others can give us.