



Department of Justice

Address by

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

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The American people are deeply concerned about the immense and increasing crime in their midst. Well we should be. More than three million serious crimes were reported in 1966; perhaps as many were unreported. Crime threatens our lives and property, our character and institutions, our hopes for ourselves and our children; the American dream itself. Crime is intolerable in a society that would be great.

Law is the basis of civilization. The violation of law is an attack on the foundation of society. No people can take pride in themselves or their accomplishments where crime is rampant. None who care can fail to be deeply concerned.

Our challenge is to translate concern into action. The time is ripe: the occasion is heavy with opportunity. A fixed goal, a steady purpose, and a relentless effort will bring a safer tomorrow.

The consequences of missing this opportunity are incalculable. Our times are particular. History has witnessed nothing comparable. Change, vast and swift change, is the fundamental fact of the day. In two-thirds of a century our population has increased by more than 250 percent. We have built highways and placed more autos on them than we had people in 1900. And we've piled more autos in junk yards than remain on the road. We have urbanized. Three-fourths are now urban. Ninety-two percent of the 100 million people added to our population between 1900 and 1960 are city and suburban dwellers. But to show the trend, between 1950 and 1960 cities absorbed more than 100 percent of our growth. Rural America lost population.

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In 67 years, science has brought to our daily lives phenomena undreamed of in 1900 and immeasurable in meaning today. Television and jet transports illustrate.

But if we have witnessed this much this first two-thirds, the final third will witness more. We will add more American citizens in the final third of the 20th Century, 140 million, than were added in the first two-thirds, 120 million. Science will bring to our daily lives developments far transcending what we now know and have.

Public safety is the first purpose of government. Police are the first team in government charged with responsibility for the safety of our citizens. If police are to meet the challenge of crime they must be professionals of the highest skills and standards with the full support of the people.

To attain the level of professionalism essential to our liberty as well as our safety is no small or easy task. The needs are comparatively clear. Fulfilling them is the hard part.

High standards for police in educational attainment, personal character, and level of performance are a first priority. Improved salaries are required to meet such standards. Intensive, continuing training, constantly refined, for all personnel is indispensable. Sound jurisdictional organization geared to today and tomorrow with highly efficient internal management are needed throughout 40,000 existing police jurisdictions. Increased effort to prevent crime before it occurs by simple precautions such as locking cars and using scientific techniques of lighting and securing can aid police significantly. Improved methods of collecting, organizing and the swift distribution of facts relevant to crime detection and apprehension can make a major difference. Automatic data processing and computer capabilities are compelled by the times. A major milestone in law enforcement was marked in January of this year when the FBI commenced operations of the National Crime Information Center.

Intensive scientific research in all areas of police and criminal justice activity is of the greatest importance.

Full coordination and cooperation between police jurisdictions and among police, prosecutors, courts and corrections agencies is necessary for the success of each. The effectiveness of any law enforcement agency is limited by the effectiveness of those with which it must work. A good city police department can be seriously handicapped by a bad sheriffs office or a bad police department in a neighboring city. The FBI can do little about organized crime in an area where local law enforcement is bad.

If prosecutors, or courts, or corrections efforts are inefficient or ineffective, police work suffers, just as prosecution will fail where police work is poor. Prosecution will be a small deterrent where great delays are caused by congested court calendars. All fail if prisons release persons bent on further crime having failed at rehabilitation.

Criminal justice is a single process involving law enforcement, prosecution, courts and prisons of all jurisdictions.

Finally, law enforcement must be elevated to a profession of highest respect among all of our people. Police community relations which is a part of this task is perhaps the most difficult and important police issue of the next decades. Clearly every police department must address itself to the issue. Chief Tom Cahill has told us "that the desired relationship between the police and the public can only be obtained by a deliberate and calculated effort. It cannot be expected to develop by chance or random."

Respect for law and respect for law enforcement go hand in hand. There will be no respect for law until there is a respect for the rights of others in the hearts of the people. In the meantime, the police will be at the eye of the storm: a subject of intense controversy, not because they are responsible for the conditions with which they deal but, because, like the mountain, they are there. Like the mountain, they must be unmoved by the storm.

The federal government has made major strides toward excellence in criminal justice in the past several years. We are committed to the pre-eminence of local law enforcement. Effectiveness and efficiency in crime control depend on excellence in local law enforcement. So does our liberty. America must never have a national police, or police states in a union of states.

On this premise, President Johnson has presented a national strategy to control crime. For three consecutive years he has submitted messages on crime to the Congress, each developing on its predecessors.

Appointment in 1965 of the National Crime Commission and a local commission for the District of Columbia resulted in the most comprehensive studies of crime and its causes and cures ever undertaken. Most of you have the volumes representing the work product of these commissions.

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The Law Enforcement Assistance Act of 1965, two years old this month, began federal aid to local law enforcement, providing valuable assistance in demonstration programs, training and research as well as experience for the Safe Streets and Crime Control Act of 1967. To date 266 grants have been made affecting directly or potentially every criminal justice agency in America.

An illustration of the projects sponsored is approval of \$252,000 last Friday to permit many more small police departments to utilize the IACP's sight-sound training program. This program provides participants film strips and supplementary printed material on basic police training subjects such as arrests, searches, investigations and crime scene procedures.

Major legislative proposals and activities in areas such as organized crime, drug control, criminal law revision, corrections reform, firearms control, riot control, and police community relations have been advanced under President Johnson's leadership.

The Safe Streets and Crime Control Act is the heart of the national strategy against crime. It recognizes as the basic need the devotion of more resources to control crime. A nation that spends \$13.7 billion a year for liquor and 8.8 billion for tobacco, spends only 2.8 billion for all police, local, state and federal, and only 4.2 billion for all criminal justice: police, prosecution, courts and corrections--federal, state and local.

The Crime Control Act seeks to guide increased investment for the public safety. It seeks to do so efficiently and effectively. As presented to the Congress by President Johnson, it offers the potential for tripling the rate of increased expenditures for police and all other criminal justice agencies from an average annual rate of five percent to more than 15 percent. This can be done by the expenditure of \$300 million federal dollars on a matching fund basis next year. If that rate of increase were maintained for several years, the potential for improvement would be immense. That it is needed seems indisputable. We are most anxious for the Congress to act so we can begin.

The House of Representatives has passed the bill and it is now pending before the Senate Judiciary Committee where many of you have testified.

One amendment in the House of Representatives is of critical importance. The original bill contemplated grants directly to local governments. The amendment grants the funds to state governments for distribution.

In March 1966, President Johnson asked the Department of Justice to work with the 50 states to establish statewide committees on law enforcement and criminal justice. This seems essential to sound, coordinated planning though not necessary to actual grant programs. Eighteen months later only half the states have indicated an interest in establishing such committees and providing state leadership for criminal justice planning. Of that half many have made no beginning.

To cause federal funds to be granted in block to states will undercut any change for national strategy. Major cities a continent apart have more in common with each other than with adjacent rural counties. Delay, confusion and waste will result since most state governments have neither the experience nor the administrative machinery to deal meaningfully with plans for local police departments. Statutory, perhaps constitutional, authorization would often be required. The difficulties of establishing and operating 50 separate grant making agencies and programs at state levels is enormous and undesirable, for many reasons.

Funds would be distributed by states rather than by need - equally to the advanced and the backward, the wealthy and the poor. Block grants to states might tend to increase unduly state police activity where local law enforcement is preferable and cause pressures on governors to distribute funds to local governments whose needs are not as great as others.

I urge your full support for President Johnson's Safe Streets and Crime Control Act and your most careful attention, judgment and action on the state block grant amendment.

We stand on the threshold of great change and opportunity for reform and excellence. The American people must understand that no profession in our troublous times is more important to the common welfare than the police. Riots and rising crime must be met with professional local law enforcement of the highest quality. Be assured of the ardent desire of the federal government to build local law enforcement - to help create new levels of excellence in police science and performance.

As President Johnson stated in his third message to the Congress on crime, "we can control crime if we will." To do so "we must act boldly. . ."