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ADDRESS  
OF  
HONORABLE BENJAMIN R. CIVILETTI,  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
BEFORE THE  
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

- - -

Monday, September 17, 1979

11:15 A.M.

Dallas Convention Center

Dallas, Texas

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1 (Applause)

2 THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Col. Spear, thank you very  
3 much. It is a pleasure for me to appear before this great  
4 session of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

5 As Attorney General and from the number of differ-  
6 ent law enforcement positions in which I have served, I know  
7 that time and time again there develops a crucial need for  
8 better consultation, cooperation, and support among all  
9 levels of law enforcement, whether federal or state or local.  
10 Such is the time now.

11 In the rush of daily work, it is often easy to think  
12 of ourselves as separate entities: The Department of Justice  
13 involved in the prosecution of federal crimes, the police  
14 departments involved in investigations of all state and local  
15 offenses.

16 Sometimes we forget that the difference between a  
17 federal crime and a state crime is the matter of nice legal  
18 distinctions, and even that the investigation and prosecution  
19 of offenses are simply successive parts of the same process.  
20 With tight budgets, the increasing burdens of inflation and  
21 the need to restrain spending, we in law enforcement are  
22 being challenged to explore ways to stretch our existing re-  
23 sources.

24 Regardless of our level of government, be it local  
25 or state or federal, we cannot ignore the people at other

1 levels of government if we are to collectively get this tough  
2 job done. We must reach out more to each other and we must  
3 give as well as take, we must lead as well as follow, and we  
4 must above all else support one another and yet not duplicate  
5 our efforts.

6 After all, we are dedicated to the common goals of  
7 achieving effective public safety. Chief among the ways we  
8 can better coordinate our efforts is to enhance our communi-  
9 cation. While I was Deputy Attorney General, for example,  
10 as the Colonel mentioned, we initiated regular meetings  
11 between my office and myself and representatives of the  
12 International Association of Chiefs of Police. These allowed  
13 a dialogue, a give and take in which we could express our  
14 ideas and our concerns and work together to insure better  
15 success. They were of immense value to us and I hope of some  
16 value to the chiefs. These meetings will continue. And  
17 while the new Deputy Attorney General will play a major role  
18 in that regard, I hope to be able to participate and to  
19 continue my personal close relationships with this organiza-  
20 tion and with its officers.

21 Another primary vehicle for greater communication  
22 and cooperation are the federal, state and local law enforce-  
23 ment committees which have been established in some form in  
24 almost all fifty states. These groups, composed of repre-  
25 sentatives of law enforcement agencies, both investigatory

1 police and prosecutive, are intended to meet on a regular  
2 basis and as need requires to engage in policy discussions,  
3 to share strategies and to coordinate efforts.

4 It is no secret to anyone here that there can be  
5 overlaps, there can be misunderstandings and at times  
6 justifiable friction between federal and state law enforce-  
7 ment officers, all in good faith, all intended to achieve  
8 legitimate purposes.

9 Through the greater cooperation resulting from  
10 these committees as well as from other efforts, we can work  
11 on important law enforcement issues together.

12 Last year, for example, the IACP provided great  
13 support for one of our most important projects by carefully  
14 analyzing and then endorsing the proposed new Federal Criminal  
15 Code. I would like to take the opportunity to express my ap-  
16 preciation and that of the Department of Justice for your  
17 continued interest and report to you today briefly on that  
18 legislation.

19 The House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, under  
20 the chairmanship of Representative Drinan, has met daily for  
21 almost six months to prepare a bill for mark-up in the sub-  
22 committee and consideration by the full House Judiciary  
23 Committee. The efforts put forth have been enormous. And  
24 the fact that only once or twice were meetings cancelled in-  
25 dicates the subcommittee's depth of interest, involvement and

1 work.

2 While we have some serious concerns about that  
3 draft which we have testified to the subcommittee, we are  
4 enormously heartened by the general approach and considera-  
5 tion given the new Criminal Code by that committee. Their  
6 draft represents a comprehensive criminal code, despite the  
7 temptation and the pressure from different groups to draft  
8 piecemeal legislation. In style and approach, it is com-  
9 patible to the Senate bill sponsored by Senators Kennedy,  
10 Thurmond, DeConcini, Hatch and Simpson, which is a sound  
11 vehicle for progress, supported by President Carter, by the  
12 Department of Justice, Griffin Bell and the IACP.

13 Another legislative area in which the IACP is now  
14 participating with the department and in which I know you  
15 have great interest is the proposed charter for the Federal  
16 Bureau of Investigation. I had the opportunity last week to  
17 give testimony with respect to the charter before the House  
18 Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional  
19 Rights and some important points were discussed at that time.

20 The fundamental principle of this legislation en-  
21 dorsed again by the administration is to insure that we will  
22 conduct ourselves in such a way as to give the American  
23 public effective law enforcement which it so desperately  
24 needs, while at the same time protecting and enhancing our  
25 basic civil and constitutional rights.

1           Your present review and possible future support for  
2 this legislation is extremely important to us but, more im-  
3 portantly, important to the citizens of this country.

4           Legislation is not the only way that by working  
5 together we can help each other reach our mutual goals. In  
6 recent years when airport security became a national problem,  
7 your members responded admirably to help federal officials  
8 staff the very successful civil aviation security program at  
9 our nation's airports. In the cargo theft area, I want to  
10 commend the IACP for establishing a cargo security committee.

11           In several cities which are transportation hubs  
12 of this country, I understand that your members' participa-  
13 tion in that program of cargo security program of the United  
14 States Department of Transportation have made significant  
15 contributions to the enforcement and prevention of cargo  
16 theft.

17           These are the kinds of joint ventures between the  
18 federal government and state and local officials that are  
19 bound to pay substantial dividends if they are tried and if  
20 they are implemented.

21           Many of you have expressed your concerns that the  
22 Justice Department's Dyer Act prosecution guidelines were  
23 preventing a maximum enforcement efforts from occurring in  
24 your jurisdictions. The communication of those concerns led  
25 to a close review within the department of those procedures.

1 Your cooperation during the past year has done much to assist  
2 us in this review and in our attempts to revise those guide-  
3 lines, and I am glad to be able to announce today that we  
4 have recently completed that review and will issue new guide-  
5 lines which accommodate those concerns in this field. These  
6 revisions, which would not have been possible without your  
7 help, should do much to strengthen the ties between us and  
8 better enable both of us to collectively enhance our overall  
9 enforcement of motor vehicle theft.

10 In the same area, it is the same type of joint  
11 effort which has led to the drafting of the Motor Vehicle  
12 Theft Prevention Act of 1979. This piece of legislation, which  
13 designed to fill the gaps in existing law, is one of the  
14 most important crime prevention measures presently before  
15 this Congress.

16 The Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations  
17 will shortly commence hearings on the motor vehicle theft  
18 problem. In our part, we will continue to do everything we  
19 can to explain the seriousness of the problem and its effects.  
20 The pending legislation has our full support because it will  
21 provide the federal government with the tools it needs to  
22 contribute its fair share to this fight and I think it  
23 will make your job better and easier in your efforts.

24 I want you to know that your continued support for  
25 this legislation will be crucial to its passage.

1           Finally, the bounds of new areas for cooperation  
2 are unlimited. Your involvement with us to revise the United  
3 States Treaty with the Republic of Mexico on the return of  
4 stolen vehicles represents a completely new area of appro-  
5 priate cooperation. This treaty, which will hopefully soon  
6 be signed by the two countries, not only represents another  
7 project on which all of us have been able to work together,  
8 but will result in building greater cooperation between  
9 officials in our country and those in Mexico.

10           Before I conclude, I would just like to mention one  
11 area where there is a great amount of room for continued or  
12 expanded cooperation. That is in economic crime enforcement,  
13 fraud and public corruption.

14           In the past, there has occasionally been little  
15 interaction between prosecutors and investigators in the fraud  
16 and public corruption areas and even less between federal  
17 prosecutors and local officials.

18           You are by now undoubtedly aware of our plans to  
19 establish economic crime enforcement offices in approximately  
20 thirty cities over the next two years, with a contingent of  
21 about 150 federal prosecutors to focus even more closely on  
22 fraud and public corruption. Eight such units have already  
23 been established initially in Portland, Oregon, Los Angeles,  
24 Denver, Cleveland, Philadelphia, New Haven, Connecticut,  
25 Columbia, South Carolina, and Birmingham, Alabama.

1           The local police officer has a role in this program  
2 not only by learning the telltale signs of fraud against  
3 consumers and businesses which many of you and your men  
4 already do well, but this organization in fact for a few  
5 years has issued a training key addressing these two points.

6           Perhaps the most important area though is fraud  
7 against the government, whether it be federal or state or  
8 local, which so often leads to public corruption. It is our  
9 duty, mine as chief law enforcement officer of the nation,  
10 and yours as chief law enforcement officers in your respective  
11 jurisdictions, to take steps to restore the confidence of the  
12 public in the integrity of its government by all of us no  
13 longer tolerating fraud, abuse, public corruption and waste  
14 and inefficiencies which so riddles us from time to time.

15           We cannot expect the average citizens, those who  
16 make up our juries and taxpayers to take us seriously about  
17 equal justice and fair law enforcement when the government we  
18 represent are themselves subjected to fraud and public cor-  
19 ruption with resulting ridicule and contempt not only on in-  
20 dividuals but on ourselves, the law enforcement community.

21           I know that economic crime is not easily detected  
22 and is difficult to investigate and to prosecute. But I  
23 urge you to take whatever positive steps to seek out fraud  
24 and public corruption       you can, to institute training  
25 programs where necessary, and to make the cops on the street

1 more aware, more diligent and to work closely with our new  
2 economic crime enforcement units that are being established  
3 about the country.

4 I mentioned earlier that I have had the great good  
5 fortune to be able to serve in a number of capacities at the  
6 Department of Justice. On each level that I have served, the  
7 IACP has provided me with enormous help and support in many  
8 different ways. Let me take this opportunity where it is  
9 appropriate to express to this conference today my sincere  
10 thanks to you for this support and the hope that I will earn  
11 your continued confidence in me.

12 One of my first acts as Attorney General was to  
13 attend a memorial service for three special agents of the FBI  
14 who were slain in the line of duty this year. As you all  
15 know, last year almost one-hundred police officers were also  
16 killed in the line of duty. These senseless tragedies should  
17 serve to remind all Americans of the dangers and difficulties  
18 involved in police work and the deadly risk and brutality  
19 visited on police officers by dangerous public criminals.

20 On a number of occasions in the past, I have stated  
21 my belief that the work of police officers in this country is  
22 the hardest, the most sensitive and provides the least of  
23 monetary and financial rewards. Despite that, there is no  
24 more professional, dedicated and hard-working group of  
25 patriotic men and women in his country than the police

1 officers of the United States. And your efforts too often go  
2 unnoticed and unpraised but severely criticized.

3 Just as I have had your support in the past, let  
4 me state again that you have mine and I praise you, the  
5 leaders of these men and women, for your honor and for your  
6 sacrifices on behalf of all the citizens of this country.

7 Thank you.

8 (Applause)

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