

REMARKS OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
SWEARING IN CEREMONY OF  
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ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
AND  
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Since taking office this Administration has responded vigorously to the grave challenges posed by organized crime and its involvement in drug trafficking. Among other things, the Department of Justice has reorganized the Drug Enforcement Administration and brought in the resources of the FBI to complement those of the DEA in the drug enforcement effort. The results have been immediate: FBI-narcotics related investigations are producing more indictments and more convictions than ever before. The number of indictments, on an annualized basis, is more than twice as many this fiscal year as last year, and the number of convictions more than 60 percent greater.

We also have implemented a substantial majority of the 64 recommendations of the Attorney General's Task Force on Violent Crime. We have achieved amendment of the posse comitatus law, thus facilitating the use of the military's resources in the fight against drug traffickers, and amendment of the Tax Reform Act. We have established closer working relationships with the governments of drug source and transit countries in Asia, Europe and Central and South America. But this is not all we have done. And today I would like to report on the progress of the program President Reagan announced almost a year ago here in the Great Hall.

The first and principal part of the program called for the creation of 12 Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces. These task forces, each assigned a specific geographical area of the country, would be designed to identify, investigate, prosecute and imprison the leadership and membership of high-level drug trafficking enterprises through a totally coordinated federal, state and local drug enforcement effort. In doing so, the task forces would enhance existing federal law enforcement efforts against drugs and organized crime through the cooperative labors of the FBI, DEA, IRS, BATF, Custom Service, the Coast Guard, and State and local law enforcement agencies.

Today the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces are almost completely staffed -- 1156 of the 1219 allocated professional positions have been filled, and 98% of the money allocated to the program has been obligated. Each of the task forces is hard at work. Already, indictments have been obtained in 28 cases against a total of 75 defendants. And another 334 cases are currently under investigation.

As planned, the task forces have relied not on the independent performance of one or two agencies but on the teamwork of the several agencies and units of government involved. The FBI has taken part in 72 percent of the 362 cases, DEA in 84 percent, IRS in 68 percent, Customs in 42 percent, and ATF in 24 percent. State and local law enforcement officials have been involved in approximately two of every five cases.

As expected, the drug trafficking cases have covered the entire range of illicit drugs -- most significantly, cocaine, marijuana, and heroin. And as also expected, most of the individuals pursued in these cases have links to traditional organized crime or are members of other criminal networks.

The records show, furthermore, that most of the individuals under investigation are involved not only in the importation and distribution of drugs, but also in the financing of drug trafficking, and in money laundering schemes. Finally, the kinds of criminal charges we are seeking to press include continuing criminal enterprise, bank secrecy, narcotics conspiracy, and public corruption.

Circumspection is in order regarding most of our cases, since most are in the investigatory stage. But to give you an idea of the work the task forces are doing, it may prove helpful to provide some of the details -- as examples -- in two of the cases in which we have obtained indictments.

The New England Regional Task Force, centered in Boston, recently indicted the top international organizers, managers and financiers of a major drug trafficking enterprise. Since 1971 this organization has imported substantially more than one-half million pounds of marijuana and hashish from Colombia, Mexico, Morocco, Thailand and Nova Scotia. The 15-count indictment charges the defendants with, among other crimes, conducting a continuing criminal enterprise, which carries a maximum sentence of life without parole, and conspiring to import and distribute marijuana and hashish.

The indictment resulted from a truly cooperative investigative effort involving federal, and state and local law enforcement officials from Massachusetts, Maine, Oregon, North Carolina, South Carolina, Colorado, and Florida. Although several smaller investigations focused on the criminal activities of these defendants prior to the institution of the Drug Task Force Program, these cases had not revealed the full nature and extent of the defendants' drug trafficking activities. Moreover, the defendants had succeeded in insulating themselves and eluding the law. The Drug Task Force enabled the various law enforcement agencies in the several jurisdictions to consolidate their investigations, coordinate their efforts, and build a major criminal case.

The second case comes from out West. The Mountain States Regional Task Force, operating in Denver and coordinating the efforts of state and local law enforcement agencies along with the IRS, DEA, ATF, and FBI, investigated and recently indicted 29 defendants for engaging in a major cocaine importation and distribution conspiracy. The indictment charges several of the defendants who served as financiers, organizers, managers, and supervisors for the illegal drug business with conducting a continuing criminal enterprise and importing cocaine. Other defendants have been charged with conspiring to distribute cocaine. The indictment seeks the forfeiture of \$1,508,420 in cash and currency, a twin engine airplane, 14 automobiles including three Mercedes Benz and 2 Porsches, one 32-foot sailboat, a substantial amount of common stock, 13 works of art, and various business interests in a video and appliance corporation, an audio business, an equipment and leasing company, and a restaurant.

As you can see from both cases, we are not up against amateurs. We are going against professionals and the networks through which they operate. They are lured to this form of crime by its high profits. By seizing assets we are trying to take the profit out of the drug business.

The Drug Task Forces represent a multi-agency, multi-district approach to drug enforcement. Their efforts do not supplant or otherwise take the place of the ongoing drug enforcement efforts of federal, state, and local agencies. As we intended, the task forces are greatly strengthening the total drug enforcement effort. Because of the task forces, law enforcement officials are now better able to target the most significant drug trafficking organizers and take better advantage of the complete range of legal sanctions and penalties available for their prosecution.

The 28 Task Force cases developed to date with their multiple defendants are the first of many to come. They clearly demonstrate that the program can successfully consolidate and capitalize on the special skills of the various investigative agencies in order to develop cases against individuals at the highest possible levels of the criminal organizations that are plaguing our communities.

At this podium last October the President also announced his intention to create an organized crime commission that would study, region by region, the influence of organized crime and recommend ways of dealing with it. By its work, the commission would heighten public awareness and knowledge about the threat of organized crime and mobilize citizen support for taking effective measures against it.

President Reagan has announced the names of 20 distinguished individuals who have agreed to serve on the Organized Crime Commission. They know the criminal law, and they have a particular knowledge of organized crime. Serving as chairman of the commission is Judge Irving Kaufman, a distinguished federal judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. The commission, which will deliberate over the course of the next three years, will hold its first meeting this fall.

Another part of the President's program called for enlisting the nation's governors in bringing about needed criminal justice reforms in state law. Within the Department of Justice we have created an agency charged with doing this. Staff members of the Governors Project, as it is called, have met with the National Governors Association staff in Washington on many occasions. And over the past six months representatives of the Governors Project have met with state officials in Maine, Illinois, Ohio, Maryland, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Michigan and Texas to address a variety of narcotics-related concerns.

Already we are seeing the sort of federal-state coordination that this project hopes to achieve. For example, the Governors Project is supplying the Governor of Texas, Mark White, at his request, with information identifying areas of criminal justice reform that might be included in a comprehensive legislative package for his state. The Governors Project also has helped secure funding for a criminal justice symposium on the use of the military in controlling illegal drugs, which will be held under the auspices of the National Governors Association and which will include a number of federal officials, including the Associate Attorney General.

The National Narcotics Border Interdiction System was created by the President last June as a direct response to state requests for expanded military interdiction efforts. Under the direction of Vice President Bush, NNBS will help curb the flow of illegal drugs across the nation's borders.

Another part of the President's program called for the establishment, through the Departments of Justice and Treasury, of a National Center for State and Local Law Enforcement Training at the federal facility in Glynco, Georgia. On March 22 of this year Secretary Regan and I signed the agreement establishing this new institution. It is staffed, and its programs are underway. Glynco will equip local law enforcement agents with the knowledge necessary to work most effectively with federal officials in combating arson, bombing, bribery, computer theft, contract fraud, bid-rigging and drug smuggling.

Still another part of the President's program called for increased funding for prison and jail facilities. President Reagan understood that any national strategy against organized crime and drug trafficking must include provision for increasing prison and jail space, especially since prison and jail facilities are already overcrowded.

The fiscal year 1983 budget included \$18 million for prison projects. This money is going to the construction of new prison space in the prisons at Petersburg, Va., Leavenworth, Kansas; Ashland, Kentucky; Butner, North Carolina; Tallahassee, Florida; Memphis, Tennessee; and Oxford, Wisconsin. These projects are at various stages of development; all are expected to be completed in late 1984 and 1985. In addition to these funds for 780 additional federal prison spaces, another \$5 million was requested to improve state and local jail facilities under the Cooperative Agreement Program. In the past two years an unprecedented \$139 million has been targeted at the problem of overcrowding in federal, state and local corrections facilities.

Last October President Reagan also announced that the administration would open a new legislative offensive designed to win approval of reforms in criminal statutes dealing with such matters as bail, sentencing, criminal forfeiture, the exclusionary rule and labor racketeering. These changes in the criminal law, he said, are essential to our national strategy against organized crime.

While I have much good news to report in regard to the other parts of the President's program, I

unfortunately must also report that Congress has yet to approve badly needed reforms of the criminal law. Last fall the Senate passed the bulk of the Administration's criminal-law-reform package by a 95 to 1 vote, and twice in the past two years it has passed legislation specifically concerning sentencing and the insanity defense. But the House of Representatives has yet to act.

This is not the time or the place to argue the particulars of the Administration's reforms. But the general comment is in order that it makes little sense for the executive branch of government -- the branch that enforces the law -- to mount a comprehensive effort against organized crime and drug trafficking if the legislative branch fails to strengthen pertinent criminal laws. We can do the best job possible of investigating and of prosecuting criminal defendants, and indeed the Congress can give us the funds for those jobs, and still the process of justice can be confounded for want of stronger criminal law.

The best government is collaborative government, government in which the three branches see their duties and see that they are done. If the House of Representatives would join its legislative brethren in the Senate and enact the needed legal reforms, the executive branch would be able to fight a more effective war against all forms of crime, and particularly organized crime.

Much has been done since the President announced a national strategy against organized crime, but much still remains to be done. The urgency is that everyone do his part, that all the parts of the strategy be put in place.

James Q. Wilson has observed that crime is not a phenomenon that can be stopped with some "magic bullet." It is not a phenomenon that responds to a simple approach. Crime is instead a complex phenomenon requiring difficult, complex, and sometimes costly efforts. These efforts are made all the more difficult by the current imbalance in the criminal justice system that favors the criminal at the expense of the innocent.

Controlling crime also requires a state of mind and will on the part of those of us in government -- a determination of intellect and hard to take crime as seriously as we do national defense. Our Founding Fathers teach us, after all, that governments are instituted among men in order to secure liberty. And it is obvious that the exercise of freedom requires protection against all predators -- not only those abroad

but also those of our fellow citizens who have learned that crime pays very well.

Today I am proud to stand beside Lowell Jensen and Steve Trott as they formally assume their offices. They are men who have the heart and mind necessary to do their duties and do them well. I have every confidence that they will do their part in executing the President's national strategy against organized crime, and in making this nation a safer land.