



Department of Justice

ADDRESS

OF

THE HONORABLE BENJAMIN R. CIVILETTI
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

BEFORE THE

FEDERAL AND STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS BANQUET

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KING'S ISLAND INN
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When the Office of Attorney General was first established in 1789, the idea was simple: The Attorney General was to be the lawyer for the United States. He was to perform the services normally sought by a client, such as legal advice and litigation representation. This simple but efficient approach has changed dramatically in 190 years. The sparsely staffed Office of the Attorney General has become a Department of Justice, employing some 55,000 persons, and having representatives in all parts of the country and even abroad. The Department includes the Bureau of Prisons, which administers a system of federal correctional institutions housing 25,000 prisoners. It incorporates a mediation agency known as the Community Relations Service, which does invaluable work in promoting harmonious relations in troubled localities. Its Drug Enforcement Administration handles the complex matter of controlling narcotics trafficking. The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration runs innovative programs for state and local law enforcement groups and backs up that commitment with substantial monetary grants.

Whereas in 1789 the Attorney General's concerns revolved around the interests of the United States in civil matters, today the Justice Department is intensely concerned with criminal law. Much of the Department's work in the criminal area is done by

people who are not lawyers; they are criminologists, investigators, sociologists, and other professionals. The Attorney General is accurately described today as the chief law enforcement officer in the nation.

Prior to my becoming Attorney General, I presided, as Deputy Attorney General, over the side of the Justice Department where the criminal law activity takes place. Consequently, I am both committed to the critical need for competent law enforcement on all levels of government and aware of the difficulties reaching that goal. For example, the most sophisticated and complex criminal enterprises in this country are not bound by the budgetary considerations that we have to deal with every day. Such conditions require us to set our priorities carefully, deciding which cases and investigations are of great enough public interest to warrant vigorous pursuit. We also have to put a premium on the coordination of efforts and on cooperation among different agencies serving the same goals.

In terms of priorities, the Justice Department has committed itself to the pursuit of criminal investigations and prosecutions in four major areas: white collar-crime, public corruption, narcotics trafficking, and organized crime. But it is not simply a matter of setting priorities. The Justice Department

is no longer content to confine its role in criminal law to reacting to offenses through investigations and prosecutions. We are and will be actively seeking out areas that need investigation, so that we will be able not only to convict major offenders, but also to prevent future crimes in these key areas. We are following a "quality-over-quantity" approach in this commitment to active criminal law enforcement, and I believe that we will achieve significant results with efficiency and economy.

The Department has been mindful of the need for cooperation and coordination. I would like to tell you about some of the steps that we have taken.

With respect to white-collar crime -- one of the Department's four priority enforcement areas -- we are coordinating a number of programs. In February, for example, the Department established Economic Crime Enforcement Units to provide a national focus on the areas of public corruption and white-collar crime. These units were themselves the result of cooperation among various governmental units. They have as their primary role the coordination of prosecution of corrupt officials and white-collar offenders throughout the country. About 150 attorneys will be allocated to 27 units to be set up in various locations during the next two years. These lawyers will identify national and

local priorities for each federal judicial district and focus investigative and prosecutorial efforts. The key to the success of this program will be the quality of the coordination.

Some of the best examples of the Department's central role in the area of criminal law enforcement are the Organized Crime Strike Forces. There are now Strike Forces in 14 major cities. Composed of experienced prosecutors and investigators from the Department of Justice, they plan, conduct and coordinate investigations of organized crime and prepare cases for prosecution. These Strike Forces cooperate with state and local agencies to encourage and support their efforts to combat organized crime. Through our role as coordinator of these organized-crime efforts, we have also enlisted greater assistance from other federal agencies. In the Department of Labor, for example, there is now a unit of 90 investigators devoted to assisting the Strike Forces with labor-management racketeering problems.

Very often, the Department can coordinate law enforcement efforts through the funding programs administered by The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. One example of this is our recently established anti-arson project. Through LEAA, we have provided funds to other federal agencies, such as the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms branch of the Treasury Department, to help it conduct training in arson investigations for its own

agents. We are also working on a large program to provide financial support and technical advice to anti-arson programs in state and local government.

Another coordinating function of the Department, with which you are no doubt familiar, is the general law enforcement training we provide for state and local officials. The Federal Bureau of Investigation provides training for these officials at the FBI Academy and at local, state and regional facilities. At the Academy, the objective is to enable senior police officials to conduct, in turn, effective basic training for members of their own agencies. Last year, the Academy trained approximately 4,500 state and local officers. More than 100,000 were trained in the field.

The last of the criminal law enforcement programs of coordination that I would like to discuss with you today is the Federal and State Law Enforcement Committee. Since 1974, formal committees have been established in more than 35 states; almost every state has some form of federal-state committee. While the composition of each committee may vary, they all include at least one United States Attorney, who is the chairperson, plus representatives from the Drug Enforcement Administration and the FBI. The state Attorney General, the local district attorney

and various state and local police officials are also members. These committees meet a few times a year. They are all tailored to the specific needs of the districts they serve. Thus far, these committees have helped the United States Attorneys develop procedures in such areas as hijacking, bank robbery, corruption and white-collar crime. In day-to-day law-enforcement efforts, these Federal and State Law Enforcement Committees provide one of the best bringing together activities at all levels so that our efforts can be efficiently directed.

Things have changed radically since the United States had a legal staff of one. And yet, the original lawyer-client relationship persists. Today's wide-ranging Department of Justice still has as its client the American people, who have a right to the protection of their laws through proper enforcement. In the effort to achieve that fundamental goal -- the goal of protecting all our citizens -- you, your colleagues and your agencies are our vital partners. May I ask you again, tonight, to continue our partnership and help achieve our mutual goal?

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