



# Department of Justice

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REMARKS

BY

DICK THORNBURGH  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

AT THE  
ORGANIZED CRIME DRUG ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE  
NATIONAL CONFERENCE

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WESLEY CHAPEL, FLORIDA

I am delighted to have this chance to speak to what I consider the most important audience involved in the effort to deal with drugs and violent crime in America -- our Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces.

Yesterday, Director Martinez and I had the privilege of accompanying President Bush to Quantico, Virginia, where we were a part of the graduation ceremony for the newest FBI Special Agents. I'm not sure if it was more thrilling for the graduates or for the dignitaries. We recognized that standing before us, taking the oath of office, were the young men and women who represent the future of law enforcement -- young men and women, committed as you are, to upholding the rule of law.

At this important occasion, as he has done constantly since his own inaugural, the President spoke of the importance of making America safe for all of our citizens. He reminded us of his commitment to free the nation from fear -- the fear of crime that strikes all too many American families. The President's commitment is embodied in his crime bill, now pending before the Congress, a bill which he challenged the Congress to pass within 100 days, to give the criminal justice system a fighting chance.

No one knows better than those of you here -- agents and prosecutors from the front lines -- of the importance of these crime control measures.

You know we need an enforceable federal death penalty for the most serious offenses. You know we need to end delays in the carrying out of criminal sentences, especially the abuses of the writ of habeas corpus in capital cases. You know we need to reform the judge-made exclusionary rule to allow all evidence obtained in good faith to be received at trial. And you know that we need to crack down on gun law violators, with tough sentences and the application of common-sense evidence rules.

Today is day eighty-six. We are but a fortnight away from the deadline that the President challenged the Congress to meet. Wouldn't it be gratifying if Capitol Hill were to give us a solid crime bill, not because of an impending election, but because this legislation is what the men and women on the front lines need to make America safe? I must remain confident that the President's case is so compelling that our bill will prevail.

Nowhere was the case for the President's crime bill made more persuasively than this past spring at our first Violent Crime Summit. Those of you who were there would certainly agree that what we saw created was a true coalition against crime.

It wasn't just another gathering of the same old faces. We gained, in fact, many new partners. Of course, the federal law enforcement agencies were well-represented, but so were their state and local counterparts. You would expect our United States

Attorneys to be there, and they were. But so were state and local district attorneys. We welcomed federal judges, and we were delighted to have state and local jurists among us. And, perhaps, most important of all, was the representation of the very people whose rights we are sworn to uphold -- citizens who were victims of crime.

And it was bi-partisan in nature. Congressman Charles Rangel, Chairman of the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, wrote me to express his view that the 1991 Crime Summit "... will enable the United States to make an impact on the violent crime and drug crisis facing our communities."

As might be expected in the wake of Operation Desert Storm, all through the Summit, we heard speakers drawing parallels between the Gulf War and the Crime War. Alas, we can offer no comparable prospect of quick victory over violent crime.

But we did come up with three Gulf War weapons worthy of emulation in our own effort: proper command and control, ingenuity of weaponry, and certainty of results. Just as the President left the real battle in the hands of those on the ground in command of the immediate forces, that is how this nation must conduct whatever endeavors we mount against drug trafficking and violent crime.

I believe that you, the managers of the OCDETF program, know how we rely on your knowledge, your choices, your tactics, and your plans. Our job from Washington is to help and to guide, but the field decisions are yours.

As for ingenuity, I know that true spirit of innovation which exists in the wily undercover agent enmeshed in a drug conspiracy or money laundering investigation. As a former prosecutor myself, I can attest that no one could be more ingenious. But in addition to the seat-of-the-pants smarts that we've gotten by with for so long, we are now ushering in an age where we can apply some of the truly high-tech, innovative new technology to our law enforcement work as well.

And as to the matter of certainty, I come back to the President's crime bill. Our laws simply must hold violent criminals accountable for their vicious acts. The law must be certain and where any law is weak or ambiguous or judicially misconstrued, it must be made that certain. The President's crime bill provides much needed fixes to ensure that certainty. It will go a long way toward putting teeth into the old saying, "Do the Crime. Do the Time."

It was almost two years ago that I gave the President what we then called our "Dun and Bradstreet report," a nationwide compilation establishing the true dimensions of drug trafficking

in this country. Many were taken aback by our declaration that this peril reached all across America, and that no part of America was immune.

People were surprised to learn from your case reports that drug traffickers were far more than just that stereotyped image of well-dressed hoods in fancy cars cruising the streets of our major cities. Our report gave them new faces: farmers in overalls amid their rural marijuana fields. Outlaw motorcycle gangs in their black leather jackets revving up the highways. And the red and blue colors marking territories in the urban jungle of the Crips and the Bloods.

It is through the OCDETF program that we have uncovered these varied, nefarious criminal enterprises and many more. And it is through OCDETF investigations that we will continue to uncover other emerging organized crime groups. And it is through OCDETF efforts that we will continue to effectively identify, target, and prosecute these outlaws.

During my tenure as Attorney General, I have become convinced that the use of multi-agency task forces is the best way to cripple, dismantle, and destroy interstate and international drug trafficking and money laundering organizations.

There was a time before Task Forces when the federal government achieved some notable successes based on unilateral, single agency investigations. In fact, we still do. But what we have seen coming to maturity is the old cat and mouse game. The mice have gotten smarter, but so has the cat. And, we have learned to use more than one cat to catch them.

The combined skills of federal agents and prosecutors, from three cabinet departments and eleven agencies and bureaus, working with agents, officers, and prosecutors from 1,200 state and local agencies have made a vast difference in concentrating our efforts on major organized criminal drug operations.

Over the years, we have dedicated increasing resources to the OCDETF effort -- a figure that this year will reach over \$400 million under the President's budget request. There can be no doubt but that increased resources have led to increased capability, which has, in turn, led to enhanced results.

Since their beginning in 1982, your 13 task forces have compiled a striking success story. In the bi-annual report I am releasing today, that record of accomplishment is self-evident. Over 16,000 members of major criminal drug trafficking organizations have been convicted since the OCDETF program was established. So far, we've got an 88 percent conviction rate --

and 85 percent of those convicted felons were put behind bars.

In the last two years alone, the task forces have been responsible for the seizure of over \$1 billion in cash and property. So, in a sense, this program is more than paying for itself!

It is no wonder, then, that the President's National Drug Control Strategy strongly endorses the OCDETF program as a model program. Through the combination of skills and expertise of its many participants, these task forces can apply law enforcement pressure at several points simultaneously, and ensure that no violation of the law will go unpunished.

The hallmark of the task forces is the ability to be innovative and flexible, drawing upon undercover and sting operations, electronic surveillance, financial investigations, and the use of investigative grand juries.

For example, through the application of some of these techniques, OCDETF agents and prosecutors secured "Big Ed" Hanserd imprisonment for 40 non-parolable years. It seems as though "Big Ed," a violent high-level cocaine dealer in the Detroit area, was often arrested, but spent little time behind bars. The Great Lakes Task Force went to work, and "Big Ed" was convicted on drug and gun charges. An organization that was



linked to six homicides, moved about 200 kilograms of cocaine each month for over five years, and maintained its own mini-arsenal of weapons and bulletproof vests, was put out of business by this OCDETF operation.

The Mid-Atlantic Task Force operating out of Philadelphia has been using the combined talents of federal, state, and local investigators and prosecutors to create the nation's first Violent Traffickers Project, highlighted at our recent Crime Summit. The goal is simple: target entire drug organizations that control neighborhoods through fear and intimidation and investigate them under the auspices of the Task Force. The neighborhood returns to normal after this blight is removed.

As part of this series of cases, over 450 drug law violators have been arrested to date, and the prosecution team has an enviable 100 percent conviction rate. Well over \$2 million in assets have been forfeited to the United States, and a substantial portion has been shared with the state and local law enforcement agencies who participated in the successes realized.

From the inner city to rural America, the OCDETF program adjusts and responds to each region's unique drug trafficking environment. In the coming year, for example, the FBI plans to use resource enhancements from the OCDETF program to target the drug organizations that dominate America's heartland.

In the last eight years, the task forces have become the "designated hitters" of our national drug control team, ensuring that program continues to hit them out of the park. I attribute that success to the synergy that results from applying the strengths of all of the participating agencies. The whole, in short, has become far greater than just the sum of its parts.

As those responsible for the day-to-day management of these task forces, I want to thank you for the truly impressive record that well deserves the designation "flagship" and "model" for drug enforcement.

You are also in an ideal position to apply one of the most important lessons that we learned from the Violent Crime Summit -- that we have to move swiftly and surely against those who wreak some of worst havoc upon our communities -- those individuals who abuse the privilege of owning a gun.

A first response is Operation Triggerlock, a program that I ordered two months ago. Every United States Attorney now has assigned a designated prosecutor to work with local authorities to target criminals in their district who can be charged under the Armed Career Criminal Act. Those with three prior state felony convictions for violent or drug offenses will be charged whenever they are found in possession of a firearm. Under federal law, they can be sentenced swiftly to 15 years -- no

probation, no plea bargaining, no parole, and no more problem to society.

I believe that programs such as Triggerlock are in the vanguard of innovation, and are laying the foundation of programs for the next generation of effective enforcement.

Six weeks ago, we gathered in the Great Hall at the Department of Justice to pay tribute to our 74th Attorney General, the late William French Smith, an innovative man who personified both integrity and dedication to the rule of law.

This was an Attorney General who recognized early in his tenure that violent crime was a menace to society, and that the Department of Justice had to take the lead and fight, with every tool at our disposal, the twin menaces of organized drug trafficking and violent crime.

Bill Smith looked around, saw bits and pieces of what he needed to make sure the job got done, and put them all together by creating the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces.

Each of you are part of Attorney General Smith's legacy. Through the very important work that you do, you continue to provide meaning to his vision. Through your combined efforts targeted against both international and domestic drug kingpins

you symbolize and keep alive our hope and dream of government united to rid the world of the ravages of drug trafficking and the violence its spawns. No job in law enforcement today is more important.

I have often said that securing the first civil right of all Americans -- the right to be free from fear in our homes, on our streets, and in our communities -- should be the foundation for all of our policy making deliberations. As you continue with this important meeting, charting the future of the OCDETF program for the years ahead, I hope you will be guided by that very important obligation to our fellow citizens.

May I wish you well and Godspeed in your efforts.