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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

January 17, 1990

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO HEADS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

The Rose Garden

12:16 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Well, welcome. And I'm meeting today with the heads of the various federal crime fighting agencies to renew our determination to defeat drugs, to defeat crime, and to destroy the kingpins behind them.

Over the past year, these agency chiefs were asked to take on even greater responsibilities, and they've answered the call with great distinction. And I only wish that Congress would finish the job that I asked them to do last spring. True, in fairness, more money has been provided for new prison space and more federal law enforcement officers, but too much work has been left undone. And Congress must act now on the rest of our package to fight violent crime, to toughen the federal sentencing for those using a firearm in the commission of a felony, to reform the rules of evidence, and to enact the death penalty proposal that I sent them. These agency heads and their agents face enough constraints and the last thing that they need is for the Congress to not move or to tie their hands.

Seven months ago we were also drafting our initial drug strategy, and I must say we've since enjoyed success in getting our first strategy approved by the Congress. The American people have rallied behind our plan. Law enforcers from the feds to the cops out there on the beat have joined together to make it work. And, in short, our first strategy laid a solid foundation for our future efforts.

And we have seen great progress where it counts -- in the streets, where record amounts of cocaine have been seized. And yet, we have yet to turn the corner. In this very city, January has been the month of murder -- the deadliest month in the history of the District of Columbia.

So we're going to press on, press hard in our second strategy, which is going to be released in advance of our budget. And all of this I will be discussing in this second annual luncheon today here.

Before we go inside, I wanted to thank three people especially -- Secretary Brady, Attorney General Thornburgh, and my very able Director, Bill Bennett. They place teamwork before turf, giving crime fighters everywhere an example of how to cooperate against crime. I'm proud of them. I'm proud of all the rest of our law enforcement people here and those with whom we're associated all across this country.

So what we want to do is get moving now. And now, if we'll go inside, we can hear from each and every one of you, if you will, as to how your work is going.

Hello, Jack. How are you? Good to see you.

Thank you all very much.

Q Mr. President, what about happened in Colombia today, sir?

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q The communication by these so-called extraditables claiming they would stop the cocaine trade, making that claim again in return for --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they've a credibility problem with me. But that's one point, and the other is, I've learned not to comment on matters that I have not seen verified. So you're asking about something that -- a statement that I just don't know anything about.

Thank you all very much.

END

12:19 P.M. EST