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. . . *on Fighting Crime*

May 19, 1989

PRESIDENT UNVEILS WIDE-RANGING PACKAGE
TO FIGHT VIOLENT CRIME

On May 15, 1989, President Bush outlined a comprehensive program to combat violent crime, designed to strengthen the nation's criminal justice system and the Federal, state, and local law enforcement partnership.

The President is proposing a common-sense approach to crime with proposals to limit access to weapons by criminals, to reform the criminal justice system, to enhance enforcement and prosecution, and to expand prison capacity to ensure both the certainty and severity of punishment.

PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE PRESIDENT'S ANTI-CRIME PROPOSALS:

Four principles underlie the goals of our criminal justice system and the means for accomplishing them:

- o We must protect citizens and their property, because Americans deserve to live in a society in which they are safe and feel secure.
- o Those who commit violent crimes should, and must, be held accountable for their actions.
- o Our criminal justice system must have as its objective the swift and certain apprehension, prosecution and incarceration of those who break the law.
- o Success in accomplishing these goals requires a sustained, cooperative effort by Federal, State and local law enforcement authorities.

ELEMENTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE CRIME CONTROL ACT OF 1989:

I. Strengthening Current Laws.

The President is calling on Congress to double the mandatory minimum penalties -- from five years to ten years in Federal prison -- for the use of semi-automatic weapons in violent crimes or drug felonies.

In addition, the Attorney General has been directed to advise America's prosecutors to end plea bargaining for violent Federal firearms offenses.

President Bush called on Congress to enact the steps necessary to implement the death penalty for the most serious Federal crimes, and urged state Governors to match these Federal initiatives -- new mandatory sentencing, tougher rules on plea bargaining, and implementing the death penalty -- in the States.

The President also announced that the Administration will make permanent the temporary suspension on the importation of any semi-automatic weapons which fail to meet the criteria specified in the Gun Control Act of 1968.

The President will propose legislation prohibiting the importation, manufacture, sale or transfer of gun magazines of more than 15 rounds.

And, to keep deadly weapons out of deadly hands, the President called on Congress to close loopholes like the one that allowed Patrick Edward Purdy to buy that deadly AKS-47 in Stockton, California.

II. Augmenting Enforcement.

The President has directed the Attorney General and the Treasury Secretary, working together with state and local authorities, to launch a comprehensive, coordinated offensive against America's most violent criminals.

President Bush requested funding for hiring 825 new Federal agents and staff -- 375 at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; 300 at the FBI; and 150 Deputy U.S. Marshals. This offensive, including State and local enforcement authorities, will target violent criminals and repeat offenders.

III. Enhancing Prosecution.

The President proposed to increase funds for the U.S. Attorneys Offices to support 1,600 new prosecutors and staff, and increase funds for the Justice Department Criminal Division to support 168 new positions, to handle drug cases, weapons offenses and other priority matters.

IV. Expanding Prison Capacity.

The President proposed an additional \$1 billion for Federal prison construction, bringing the total FY 1990 budget to over \$1.5 billion. This will add 24,000 new Federal prison beds to the current 31,000 beds, an increase of nearly 80%.

PRESIDENT BUSH LAUNCHES NEW STRATEGY TO "TAKE BACK THE STREETS"

On May 15, the President participated in the National Peace Officers' Memorial Day Service, declaring to law enforcement officers assembled on the steps of the U.S. Capitol:

"We're going to take back the streets -- by taking criminals off the streets."

He urged a "return to common sense," and continued:

"A common sense approach to crime means that if we are going to affect people's behavior, we must have a criminal justice system in which there is an expectation that: If you commit a crime, you will be caught; and if caught, you will be prosecuted; and if convicted, you will do time."

After unveiling his new offensive to fight what he called the "new class of criminals" on our streets, the President concluded:

"Not since Lincoln has a President stood in front of the Capitol and been just a few miles from the front line of a war. Never was the toll more visible than in the faces of the brave men and women -- the families -- gathered here today. And when I first stood here as President ... I made a promise: 'This scourge will stop.' And that's a promise we intend to keep."

LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS BACK KEY ELEMENTS OF CRIME PACKAGE

Across the country, law enforcement officials are backing the President's proposals to fight crime:

"He sent a message to the criminal element that if you commit a crime you're going to get caught, that if you get caught you're going to get prosecuted, and if you get prosecuted and convicted you're going to jail -- and that requires a broad, comprehensive program of the type he proposed today." -- Attorney General Dick Thornburgh.

"We feel [the President's package] is a get-tough policy, and one that is urgently required if we are to make any headway in fighting crime. We are encouraged by the President's commitment to the crime issue." -- John Bellizzi, Executive Director, International Narcotics Enforcement Officers Association.

"George Bush has never wavered in his commitment against crime and in his support for victims of crime. This package is consistent -- and in fact is going forward -- with what he has been doing." -- Frank Carrington, Executive Director, Victims' Assistance Legal Organization.

"The president took the first step ... I thought the step he took was a giant step. I applaud the President's law enforcement package." -- Washington, D.C. Police Chief Maurice Turner

"I am very pleased with the idea that there are going to be added federal prosecutors, that they're adding new employees to the ATF and US Marshals, and the fact that there is \$1.5 billion for new prison construction." -- Mr. Robert Scully, National President, National Association of Police Organizations

"We are especially heartened by the additional resources being recommended for federal prosecutors and federal prisons ... We also strongly endorse the President's position that calls for reform of our habeas corpus procedures and the provision which would provide a good faith exception to the Exclusionary Rule." -- Mr. Jack Yelverton, Executive Director, National District Attorneys Association.

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