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Office of the White House Press Secretary
(Cleveland, Ohio)

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
BY THE PRESIDENT OVER MUTUAL RADIO
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1976

I want to talk with you this morning about one of the greatest concerns of this campaign. The issue is crime.

For too long, the fear of crime has cast its ominous shadow on the streets of America.

For too long, the conscientious efforts of law enforcement officers throughout America have been compromised by a system of "revolving-door" justice and by a lack of adequate community involvement in crime prevention.

For too long the rights of the victims of crime have not had the same protection as the rights of the criminal defendants.

During the past two years, we have begun to make headway against crime in America.

In 1974, the crime rate increased by 18 percent. Last year, the increase was down to nine percent. And for the first six months of this year, the increase in the overall crime rate was only three percent.

The incidence of violent crime -- murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault -- actually went down.

This is real progress -- not just because of the statistics but because Americans are beginning to feel safer in their own neighborhoods and on the streets of our cities.

The role of the Federal Government in law enforcement is limited. We do not have a national police force -- and we don't want one.

But the Federal government can serve as a model for law enforcement efforts at the state and local level. My administration is setting a good example.

First, I have proposed a comprehensive revision of the Federal Criminal Code to replace the overlapping, contradictory and outdated statutes now on the books.

Second, I have proposed strict, automatic prison sentences for those convicted of such Federal crimes as hijacking and kidnapping, and for those who use a gun or other dangerous weapon in the commission of a crime.

Third, I have proposed unprecedented funding for the Federal Government's Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, which provides equipment and training for local police officers.

Fourth, I have proposed tougher laws against drug pushers: for example, permitting judges to deny bail for defendants with a prior criminal record and imposing mandatory sentences for convicted pushers.

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Fifth, I have proposed increasing the number of Federal judges to relieve the crowding of court dockets and to reduce the delay in bringing criminal cases to trial.

Sixth, I have recommended four new Federal prisons, to relieve overcrowded or inhumane conditions in our penal system and to give judges no reason to keep convicted criminals out of jail.

Seventh, I have initiated a "Career Criminal" program in twelve key cities throughout America, and it will be 100 cities by 1978. This program, which began last year, identifies habitual criminals, sets up special prosecution procedures, and in 95 percent of the cases, results in conviction and in prison sentences that average more than 20 years.

We have also established a Public Integrity Section within the Justice Department to discover and prosecute official corruption. Furthermore, my Administration is now devoting more resources to combat "white collar" crime than any other Administration in history.

Most important, I have asked for a new, active spirit of cooperation from you, the American people, to help us defeat our common enemy, crime.

I have promised America a new generation of freedom, the freedom to walk the streets in safety, to be secure in our homes and neighborhoods, to trust the honesty and integrity of public officials.

On July 4th, we celebrated the first two hundred years of America's history. On November 2nd, with your help, we will begin a new generation of freedom for all Americans.

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