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30-E. 42nd St. N.Y.

National Press Building
Washington, D.C.

The former executive director of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, James Vorenberg, said the nation has little to show for the almost \$1-billion spent under the Safe Streets and Crime Control Act of 1968.

Not only does crime continue to increase, Vorenberg said, but because of the opposition of Rep. John Rooney (D.-N.Y.), chairman of the key subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, who is suspicious of research, "there has been a five-year drought in funds for the research authorized by the original Act."

"Thus, not much more is known about specific techniques of crime prevention today than was known five years ago, and the prospect for new answers in the next few years is bleak."

Writing on "The War on Crime: The First Five Years," in the current (May) issue of The Atlantic, now on newsstands, Vorenberg said the States had done a poor job with the "block grants" of federal funds made available to them under the 1968 Act to fight crime.

Vorenberg said that the lump sums given to the States by Washington to follow their own plans have been administered by state bureaucracies "many of which are controlled by old-line representatives of those very same state and local police departments, courts, prosecutors, and correctional agencies that need to be changed"

He went on to say, "Except for a few states where the planning agencies have insisted on substantial change as a condition of funding, there is little to show for the almost one billion dollars that has been spent. Some of the early funds were wasted on military equipment for riot control."

Vorenberg, who was named executive director by President Johnson in 1965 of the President's (Crime) Commission, said that the fight against crime has been deteriorating under the Nixon Administration and that Mr. Nixon, during the 1968 campaign, was responsible for taking the steam out of the reform movement.

After two years of study, the Crime Commission which Vorenberg headed, and which was chaired by then Atty. Gen. Nicholas Katzenbach, made more than 200 specific recommendations to overhaul the nation's system of criminal justice.

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"Yet five years later crime is unquestionably a far worse problem for the country than it was then, and our system of criminal justice---the police, courts, and corrections agencies---seems less capable of coping with it. The Department of Justice consoles us with the assurance that although crime is still increasing, the rate of increase is slower. For former Atty.-Gen. John Mitchell, who made heavy use of crime statistics in the 1968 presidential campaign, the 25 per cent increase in the reported crime rate during the first three years of the Nixon Administration must present a strategic puzzle as he plans the 1972 campaign."

Vorenberg criticized the manner in which police departments had made use of Federal aid, the lack of adequate policemen on the beat, overcrowding in the courts, and the prisons.

"Much of the federal aid to police has gone for such flashy items as helicopters, computerized communications systems, and new weaponry. Yet these have not produced a significant impact on crime. Little progress has been made on Commission proposals that police presence on the streets be increased by hiring civilians for clerical and administrative tasks. (New York City, with 32,000 policemen, has a maximum number of 3,500 on the street at one time,)" he said.

The former commission director said, "While there has been some overall improvement in the police in the past five years, and perhaps corrections has held its own, the quality of the adjudication process---the responsibility of the courts---seems clearly to have deteriorated over the same period. Many lower criminal courts look more like factories than halls of justice.

"More than half of the people in jail in this country," he continued, "are there because they are awaiting trial, not because they have been convicted."

He explained, "Whatever deterrence of crime the threat of penal sanctions might exercise is undermined as thousands of defendants go free, not because they have been acquitted but because courts and prosecutors are too overwhelmed by their work load to consider their cases."

Vorenberg recommended, "If we want the criminal system to be able to handle the present volume of traffic we must double and triple the number of courtrooms, judges, prosecutors and defense counsel---and be ready to keep on increasing the number in the future."

At present, he said, the only way prosecutors and judges can keep the overburdened courts operating at all is to drop cases or offer concessions to defendants who will agree not to assert their rights. Lawyers who deliberately delay cases by repeated motions, and delays, subvert the legal process. Of 90,000 felony arrests in Manhattan last year, he said, only 500 resulted in trials. The other cases were dismissed or reduced to misdemeanors in return for a guilty plea.

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Vorenberg called upon the courts to follow the recommendation of the Crime Commission, which said the Courts must adopt modern administrative and business management methods that would avoid repeated appearances and continuances.

He was also critical of the manner in which Mr. Nixon employed the crime issue during the 1968 presidential campaign, a year he termed "a bad one for criminal justice." Vorenberg said that during the campaign, "Mr. Nixon repeatedly cited decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court as being the major cause of crime. The result was to provide police officials, prosecutors, legislators, and the general public with an easy explanation for the enormous increases in crime in the late sixties.

"This relieved some of the pressure for change, a process which criminal justice officials were beginning to find more painful and difficult than they had expected," Vorenberg observed.

Vorenberg went on to say that even if all the recommendations of the Crime Commission had been successfully implemented, the resulting reduction in crime would have been more than offset by increasing resulting from "the enormous spread of drug addiction."

Present drug policy, he said, requires some 250,000 addicts to get their heroin illicitly, putting "enormous pressure on them to rob, steal, prostitute themselves, or sell drugs to raise money." By making drugs available to addicts at clinics, the economic pressure upon them---causing them to commit crimes---would be reduced, Vorenberg believes.

But, he said, even if we were to double or quadruple the effectiveness of law enforcement, the odds in favor of the law-breaker escaping capture would still be quite high. The odds against the police catching the average burglar, he said, are "probably no better than 50 to 1."

Such a risk might deter a middle-class citizen from commission of a crime but those living in poverty have little to lose, he pointed out. For them, Vorenberg said, crime may still be a good bet. "The only way to make crime a worse gamble is to give people decent enough lives on the outside so they are unwilling to risk arrest and conviction."

Vorenberg said, "The view that the level of crime is determined less by law enforcement than by the extent to which we make life worthwhile for those at the bottom of the economic and social ladder is not a partisan one."

And he concluded, "Today, I find it hard to point to anything that is being done that is likely to reduce crime even to the level of five years ago."