

Levi Terms ACLU, NRA Stands 'Crazy'

8/10/76
By John P. MacKenzie
Washington Post Staff Writers

ATLANTA, Aug. 9—Attorney General Edward H. Levi today accused gun lobbyists and civil libertarians of "going crazy," over gun control and wiretrapping, substituting passion for reason on those issues.

Levi told the Federal Bar Association that the National Rifle Association and the American Civil Liberties Union have made rational debate difficult on proposals to curb handgun traffic and to permit controlled eavesdropping in foreign intelligence investigations.

A society that can't discuss gun control without the National Rifle Association going crazy, or that can't discuss warrant procedures for electronic surveillance without the counterpart of the NRA—namely the American Civil Liberties Union—going crazy, is a society which is having difficulty looking at issues in a candid way," he said.

The Ford administration is seeking legislation to authorize federal judges to issue warrants for eavesdropping in foreign intelligence cases. Levi says the administration's bill contains unprecedented safeguards for civil liberties, but the ACLU contends it would permit wiretaps of conversations of persons who have committed no crime.

The Attorney General's remarks, came in answer to questions at a breakfast meeting of the Federal Bar Association, an organization of 15,000 lawyers who work for the government or litigate against it. The meeting was part of the annual convention of the 210,000-member American Bar Association.

Levi told another questioner that he remains satisfied with the way FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley is handling revelations about past bureau abuses.

"I work closely with director Kelley," Levi said. "He is doing a job that needs to be done" in dealing with new disclosures and attempting to correct abuses.

The convention opened formally today with a renewed appeal by Chief Justice Warren E. Burger for additional federal judges to cope with mounting caseloads. A bill to add new judgeships is stalled in Congress.

Burger said the ABA should seek "some means to see to it that every time we approach a national election all additions of demonstrably needed new federal judgeships are not embroiled in partisan political conflicts."

In a dinner speech, Supreme Court Justice William H. Rehnquist said he fears that federal judgeships are becoming less attractive to qualified lawyers not only because of salary problems, but because more and more



EDWARD H. LEVI
... sees passion replacing reason

of a judge's day involves "routine and uninteresting tasks."

Rising work volumes, including review of massive Social Security records in lawsuits authorized by Congress, is increasingly saddling courts with "work which neither requires nor engages the abilities of a first-rate judge," Rehnquist said. He spoke at the ABA's annual banquet honoring the judiciary.

ABA President Defends Attorney Advertising Code

ATLANTA, Aug. 9 (UPI)—The president of the American Bar Association today defended the ABA against charges that it is keeping the public in the dark about the cost of legal service.

Attorney Lawrence E. Walsh of New York told the ABA's opening assembly that the association's code limiting attorney advertising is nothing more than a model for the states, each of which has its own regulations.

Walsh noted that Attorney General Edward H. Levi, who brought a lawsuit challenging the code, was sitting on the platform behind him, along with Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, whose court may eventually rule on the case. But he said he was impelled to deny that the ABA is violating anti-trust law by restricting price competition among lawyers.

"We don't feel that a court or any other agency of government can tell us what we should advocate," Walsh told the assembly.