

Ford Asks Action on Criminals

Swift Justice, Longer Jailing Is Advocated

9. 25. 74
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President Ford advocated "swift and prolonged imprisonment" for criminals in a speech here yesterday in which he announced a new program to keep track of professional criminals.

"We must take the criminal out of circulation," the President said to applause at the convention of the International Association of Chiefs of Police at the Washington Hilton Hotel.

"We must make crime hazardous and costly," he said. "We must ensure that swift and prolonged imprisonment will inevitably follow each and every offense. Only then will we deter others from pursuing careers of crime."

Mr. Ford praised the valor of Gail Cobb, the 24-year-old District of Columbia police-woman killed last week while attempting to arrest a holdup suspect. Her funeral was taking place at the time the President spoke, and he asked the police officers to observe a moment of silence in her memory.

The President announced that he had directed the Justice Department to undertake, with the cooperation of state and local governments, a career criminal impact program to target and keep track of criminal repeaters.

Later, the President's spokesman, Ron Nessen, confirmed that Donald Rumsfeld, U. S. ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty organization, would become assistant to the President to coordinate White House operations.

Rumsfeld will assume the

post Friday, taking over most of the duties of Alexander M. Haig Jr., who has resigned to become commander of American forces in Europe and NATO commander.

However, Rumsfeld will not have the title of White House staff chief, as Haig did, but he will have cabinet rank.

"It's a Ford White House, not a Nixon White House," Nessen said when asked if Rumsfeld would have the power of Haig and his predecessor, H. R. Haldeman.

"The President wants to have access and does have access to a lot of people," Nessen said.

There are several senior advisers to the President and they all will be equal in status, Nessen explained, adding that Mr. Ford and Rumsfeld will work out the White House staff organization.

Haig had been not only a staff chief but in the final months of the Nixon administration was in effect a deputy President.

Nessen said that he had
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asked White House press office staff members to remain in their posts. He said the President was promoting Thomas DeCair, a Nixon press aide, to the post of assistant press secretary. John W. Hushen is deputy press secretary.

The President conferred on European-American relations with British Foreign Secretary James Callaghan, who is in the United States to attend the U.N. General Assembly.

In his speech to the police chiefs, Mr. Ford said the career criminal impact program he is inaugurating on a national scale will be similar to a D.C. program to keep records on criminal repeaters.

The D.C. police plan, called the major violator recidivist unit, keeps records of persons arrested who are on release from an earlier charge or conviction.

The D.C. plan keeps track of major repeaters and "ensures that these cases receive the most urgent attention of prosecutors," Mr. Ford said. "This unit has dramatically reduced the ability of case-hardened offenders to escape through the loopholes of the criminal justice system."

The President urged the police officers to give "high priority" to violent crimes in the inner cities.

"There is where crime does the most damage to our whole urban structure," he said. "There is where crime most hurts the poor who already suffer enough."

To reduce the crime rate greater public cooperation with police officers is essential, the President said. A study in the nation's capital "shows that noncooperation of witnesses was by far the most common reason for losing major cases," he said.

Other surveys show, he said, that victims of crime too often hesitate to cooperate fully because they do not want to get involved with all the necessary red tape. Some fear reprisal. But public cooperation is necessary "to reduce the crime rate," Mr. Ford said.