

Levi Says U.S. Is Studying Ways to Curb Pistols in Urban Areas

By JOHN M. CREWDSON
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WASHINGTON, April 6—Attorney General Edward H. Levi said today that the Justice Department was considering a number of proposals that would reduce or eliminate the possession of pistols in metropolitan areas.

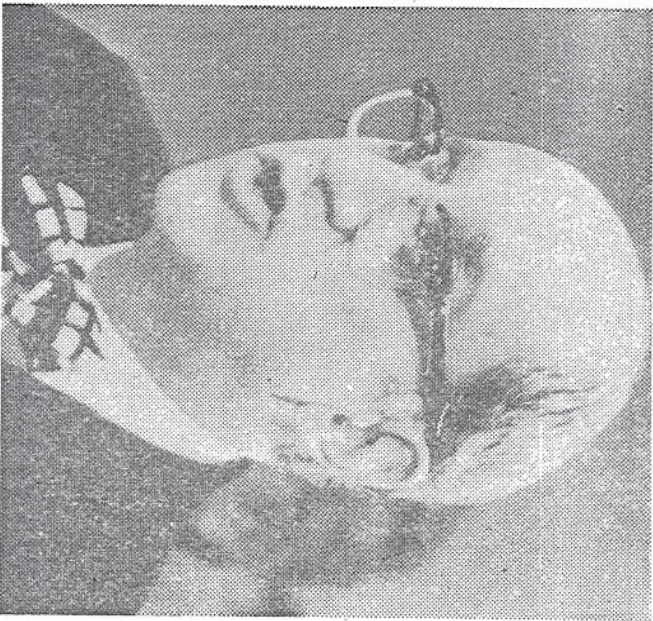
In a speech before the Law Enforcement Executives Narcotics Conference here, Mr. Levi outlined the measures that he said he believed might stem further increases in the estimated national supply of more than 40 million pistols and prohibit their possession in high crime areas outside the home or place of business.

The pistol, he said, "makes an individual in a city too powerful for his environment. It is a menace because it can be so readily hidden. It is a mechanism that translates passion or passing evil intent into destruction."

State, local and Federal laws regulating the impact and sale of pistols, the Attorney General said, "have proven to be insufficient" in affecting the "great carnage" and "even greater anxiety" he laid to their use.

Mentioned at Conference

At a news conference last week, Mr. Levi mentioned gun control as an example of the kind of social issue that he said ought not to be "swept under a rug" by society only to be "dragged out before a court" on a case-by-case basis



United Press International
Attorney General Edward H. Levi said gun control was kind of issue that "should not be swept under the rug."

and then resolved in an advisory proceeding.

He said that he had recently discussed the department's gun control study with President Ford, who "encouraged us to go ahead" with the attempt to find some mechanism that could be put into a legislative proposal.

One remedy under discussion within the Justice Department, night

The Justice Department, he said, believed that an effective test could be devised to define such weapons "with sufficient clarity," based on such factors as size, barrel length and the metallurgical quality of the weapon.

One approach under consideration, he said, which would reduce the attractiveness of such weapons to potential purchasers, involves a "graduated tax" that would bring the price of each cheap pistol up to "some specified level," such as \$100.

Mr. Levi pointed out, however, that "Saturday night specials" are not the only weapons on the street, and that a prohibitive tax or even an outright ban on their manufacture or sale would not eliminate the threat caused by other pistols, cheap or expensive.

A second approach therefore under consideration, he said, involves the prohibition of the possession of any pistol outside the home or place of business if the local violent crime rate should rise above a certain level.

Statistical Area

As an example, Mr. Levi suggested that such a ban should take effect if the violent crime rate in a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area was either 20 per cent higher than the national average or 10 per cent higher than the national average and 5 per cent higher than the previous year's local rate.

A Metropolitan Statistical

Area is defined as a central city of 50,000 or more inhabitants and its surrounding political subdivisions.

Mr. Levi said that, under his suggested criteria, a Federal pistol prohibition law would have been put into effect in 62 such areas, including New York City, Washington, Chicago, Baltimore, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Although Mr. Levi's address gave no clue as to the sort of ultimately recommend for trans-lation into Federal law, he seemed to prefer the second approach of prohibiting street possession in high crime areas.

Such an approach, he said, "would avoid the problem encountered in so many cities whose neighboring suburbs do not control handguns strictly."

In addition, he said, it would "leave unaffected the use of handguns in vast areas of the nation, in cities where violence has not reached emergency proportions and in rural areas where handgun use is both less threatening and more legitimate."

Gambling Casino on Cruises

SAN JUAN, P.R. (UPI)—Car-nival Cruise Lines expects to have a gambling casino in operation aboard its cruise ship Mardi Gras this winter. The casino will operate when the ship is on the high seas, but will be closed in ports. The Mardi Gras operates out of Miami on weekly cruises to San Juan, St. Thomas and Nassau.