

A clean U.S.: Start at the top

If we are to restore respect for the law we will have to begin at the top, says Sen. Frank Church, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. The Idaho Democrat made that point and many others this week in a major speech to San Francisco's Commonwealth Club. Here is a partial text of his speech:

The two attempts on President Ford's life should remind us once again that violence lurks at every corner, hides in every crowd and haunts every neighborhood.

Violence is the most ubiquitous symptom of a disease spreading through our society, an epidemic of lawlessness, which, unless checked in time, could prove fatal to democracy itself.

The lawlessness of which I speak extends far beyond common crime and it involves far more than ordinary theft and conventional violence. It is not the kind of crime that comes immediately to mind.

The sense of community — of the duty each citizen owes to his fellow citizens — seems to be evaporating. A social cannibalism is emerging in its place. We are beginning to feed on each other. We are taking rather than giving. Selfishness is displacing scruples about the common good.

The longshoremen refuse to load wheat sold to Russia. Their refusal has nothing to do with wages or working conditions, but rather with their opposition to the sale. The law is disregarded. By refusing to load the grain, the union displaces the government and usurps to itself the right to

"Senator, how do I teach my kids to grow up honest when the government is a partner with the underworld?"

determine trade policies.

A teachers' union defies a court order against a strike, rather than taking an appeal to a higher court. What do those teachers now tell the children who find given laws personally inconvenient?

Last month, the police in San Francisco abandoned their city to crime, staged an illegal strike and ignored court orders, while packing pistols on the picket line. If the police can defy public order, then the army is next. No society can long endure strikes against the public health or safety.

But, lest there be any thought that public employes are alone in flaunting the law, we have only to look to the boardrooms of our largest corporations . . . We have found:

- I.T.T. secretly offering the CIA a million dollars to prevent Allende, lawfully elected by the people of Chile, from becoming president. Like the longshoremen refusing to load wheat, this giant corporation sought to usurp for itself the right to determine the course of American foreign policy.

- EXXON parceling out 27 million dollars in political contributions in Italy in return for economic favors from the government.

- Gulf Oil doling out \$4 million in illegal corporate contributions in Korea.

- Northrop paying an agent \$450,000 to bribe Saudi Arabian generals.

- United Fruit slipping the president of Honduras \$1.2 million to lower the export tax on bananas.

- Lockheed admitting illegal payments to government officials in countries around the globe . . . in Europe, in Asia, in the Middle East and in the Far East, amounting to many millions of dollars.

All of this wrongdoing is acknowledged by straight-faced executives who say they had to break the law to get the business. The excuse, after all, is written plainly in the adage, "When in Rome . . ."

But the excuse is hollow. The bad habits of Rome were brought home to America. The roster of companies that made illegal corporate contributions to the Nixon campaign in 1972 include such luminaries as American Airlines, 3-M, Northrop and Gulf. And the list has only commenced to be exposed.

Perhaps the most depressing aspect of this corporate lawlessness is that it is authorized at the highest executive levels. These corrupt practices are not aberrations engineered by underlings. They are company policy. Contempt for the law has come to preside in the boardrooms of our largest companies.

I would like to think that the high-fever point of our national affliction of demeaning the law came a year ago, with the resignation of Richard Nixon. Proof of the illegal and unethical conduct of the nation's chief executive finally forced him out of office, a step ahead of impeachment.

The lesson of that painful ordeal is that, if we are to restore respect for the law to a position of primacy in our society, we will have to begin at the top.

Within the federal government, the place to start is with the keepers of the law — those agencies charged with law enforcement and secret intelligence activities. If they won't respect the law, who will?

The investigation of these agencies — the FBI and the CIA — by the Senate Committee I chair came about as a result of widespread charges of unlawful conduct and wrongdoing.

We know now that the CIA has toyed with murder abroad — in league with the Mafia, no less.

The FBI has admitted to a whole series of infractions, unrelated to law enforcement, but directed instead toward the harassment of law-abiding citizens.

Justice Louis Brandeis once wrote: "Decency, security and liberty alike demand that government officials shall be subjected



Sen. Frank Church: Lawlessness everywhere

to the same rules of conduct that are commands to the citizens. In a government of laws, existence of the government will be imperiled if it fails to observe the law scrupulously. Our government is the potent, the omnipresent teacher. For good or ill, it teaches the whole people by its example."

Adlai Stevenson, as civilized a man as ever sought the presidency, tried to tell us: "As citizens of this democracy," he said, "you are the rulers and the ruled, the law-givers and the law-giving — the beginning and the end."