

NYTIMES 17 DEC 70

Support Your Local Police

The most sensible and cogent views yet presented on the subject of guns have been set forth by a man in the best possible position to know, New York's Police Commissioner Patrick V. Murphy. His recent remarks to the National Association of Citizens Crime Commissions should be required reading for every Congressman and legislator in the country — especially those who are bemused by the gun lobby's hypocritical argument that regulation would aid the criminal at the expense of the lawful citizen.

The Commissioner is incensed, as every decent citizen must be, at the wanton killing of policemen, always with guns that never should have been allowed to fall into the hands of their murderers in the first place. In his two-month tenure as Commissioner, he has already had the sad duty of trying to console the families of three such victims.

Mr. Murphy wants no more of these police sacrifices, and he knows that in case after case the killers have taken their weapons from other victims or stolen them from gun dealers who would not even be in business if the entire traffic were stopped. In short it is the American people themselves, including many who shout the loudest about "crime in the streets," who by fighting all gun controls in the name of freedom "tolerate and abet assault, robbery, murder and street crime at gunpoint."

Indeed, Mr. Murphy goes further than that. The time for mere regulation is past, he feels. "We are at that point in time and terror when nothing short of a strong uniform policy of domestic disarmament will alleviate the danger. . . . Let us take the guns away from the people"—with proper exemptions of course.

Responding quickly to the Commissioner's call, Representative Jonathan B. Bingham of New York demands an "absolute prohibition of hand guns in private hands in this country." Such a ban would in no way affect sportsmen. Neither, in effect, would the licensing of hunting rifles, which is no more an infringement of freedom than licenses to drive, marry, fish or open a barbershop. Those who really want to support their local police can begin by supporting Commissioner Murphy's call for domestic disarmament.