



Prepared Remarks of Attorney General Alberto Gonzales

Gatlinburg Law Enforcement Conference

Gatlinburg , Tennessee

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Thank you for that introduction, Sandy. It's good to be with you today. The Gatlinburg Law Enforcement Conference symbolizes the kind of cooperation and coordination our Nation needs to prevail in the war on terror and in the fight against crime.

Here we have gathered together prosecutors and officers, agents and troopers, men and women from almost every agency of federal, state, and local law enforcement in this region. And here we have the collective expertise and leadership required to advance the cause of freedom and justice for all.

As you know I have been Attorney General for only a few months. For four years I worked on behalf of the American people as President Bush's Counsel. And though I no longer work at the White House, every time I drive through the gates in to the White House compound or whenever I walk in to the Oval Office, I am reminded of the awesome responsibility that the President shoulders, and the corresponding duty that falls upon all of us who serve the American people with him.

It is hard to be around the President and not learn, simply by watching and listening. Likewise, it is difficult to be around him and not like him...even for those who disagree with his policies.

President Bush is deliberate and serious about his duties in these extraordinarily difficult times. But he has a wonderful sense of humor and charm—like his mother—that is disarming and comforting.

The President has an insightful sense of his destiny, his place in time, and his role as commander in chief. With remarkable skill, he wisely chooses the battles to fight, knowing that there is so much good that can be achieved through the majestic power of the Presidency, but he also accepts that there are limits to what can be accomplished—even for the President of the United States.

This President does the very best that he can. And he is very comfortable knowing that is all he can do. I think that serenity and quiet confidence comes from his very real and strong faith.

Since the horrific attacks of September 11, President Bush and the American people have looked to us in law enforcement to do all that we can to track down and stop terrorist operatives as well as protect families, friends and our fellow citizens from crime.

I am happy to report we are succeeding. Because of the teamwork, training, and tactics pioneered at gatherings like this one, we are able to achieve more for our Nation than ever before.

Our success as law enforcement officers requires us to fight for justice—block by block, city by city, day by day. This means we must fight for individual citizens—protecting children, families, and citizens at every opportunity and in every community across America.

I salute you for the battles fought and the battles yet to come.

I would also like to salute your families. The wives, mothers and daughters, the husbands, fathers and sons, who support the fine men and women in law enforcement serve our Nation, too.

While I have only been in this job for a short time, I have served in government for more than 10 years. Over the years, I have learned that it is the families who really sacrifice. My brother is a SWAT officer and a 26-year veteran of the Houston Police Department. I know that his wife hugs him as he goes to work, carrying the knowledge that he faces unknown dangers with every shift.

As members of law enforcement, we can become consumed with arrests, cases, and prosecutions. And these are important. But we must never forget our families. There is no investigation, no assignment, no conviction that is as satisfying as the hug of an adoring child or as comforting as the loving embrace of a loyal spouse.

To the families, I say thank you.

As we carry forward our efforts, each of you in this room and your colleagues across America represent the face of law enforcement. You carry the solemn obligation of our government to extend freedom and justice to every person. This is a heavy burden. But one you have proven you can shoulder even in the face of tightening budgets and fewer resources.

Thanks to your hard work and the sacrifices of your families, we have driven down the violent crime rate to its lowest level in 30 years. And for more than three years we have been free of a terrorist attack on U.S. soil.

We have achieved impressive results in both crimefighting and counter-terrorism by working as a team. To continue to build on this record, we must continue to work as a team and exercise bold leadership to fulfill all our duties and obligations.

I'd like to highlight some of the areas in which I believe we can make important progress for the American people.

I know you all understand that on September 11 th, 2001, we came face to face with a new threat to America. At that moment, the top priority of the United States government became—and remains today—to protect our citizens against terrorism.

In the more than three years since those horrific attacks, thanks to your efforts—and those of millions of men and women in federal, state, and local law enforcement, the intelligence community, and our military—we've made real progress in the war on terror.

Very recently, I have read stories about certain government officials saying that we have been so successful that al Qaeda no longer poses a real threat to our homeland, that instead they are focused on our interests overseas.

I believe to the contrary, that despite our successes, the threat posed by al Qaeda and other similar groups is still very real. In the weeks and months following Sept. 11, my sons asked me whether the terrorists were still trying to kill me, and they had nightmares about bad men trying to break into our home.

Those nightmares are gone, but we cannot afford to grow complacent. We cannot dare to assume the quiet of today will mean peace for tomorrow. As President Bush has reminded us, "we must not allow the passage of time or the illusion of safety to weaken our resolve in this new war."

All of us in the justice community are keenly aware of the continuing threat posed by terrorists.

I see it every morning when I begin my day with an intelligence briefing, and you see it through bulletins and updates from your local Anti-Terrorism Advisory Councils. Our continuing effort is to ensure every level of law enforcement is getting the information and support to track down and stop terrorist plots before they are launched. Terrorist cells across America have been stopped by nearly every level of law enforcement—from an alert sheriff's deputy in the Northwest to FBI agents in New York and New Jersey. We need every badge and every hand involved.

That's why, as Attorney General, I am committed to giving you the tools and resources you need to confront this continuing danger. And it is also why the Department of Justice is committed to the reauthorization of the PATRIOT Act.

I know how important the tools of the PATRIOT Act are to you in the fight against terror. Because of the Act the law enforcement and intelligence communities are now sharing important information that allows us to adapt and adjust to al Qaeda's constantly changing tactics.

As you know, our Nation's leaders are currently engaged in a discussion about the PATRIOT Act. I know that some of you have been engaged in similar debates in your local communities before city councils and county commissioners. I want to thank you for doing your part to educate the American people that the PATRIOT Act helps protect America while respecting the civil liberties of Americans. This debate has provided the Department the opportunity to explain that law enforcement officials have exercised care when using these authorities. Moving forward I welcome the debate and encourage people to come forward to offer clarifications to the law, but I cannot support changes to our laws that would make America less safe against terror and crime.

Of course, the war on terror is not the only challenge for America's justice community. We must continue to be vigilant and move aggressively in several other areas to fully promote equal justice for all.

I know that you face a variety of challenges. Some problems are widespread—such as the twin scourges of illegal drugs and gang-related crime. But those problems can manifest themselves in different ways for different communities. For individual districts and communities the problems might be crystal meth labs, cocaine trafficking, or gang warfare.

I know, in particular, that meth production is an increasing threat in the Southeast. Meth labs can overtake small towns quickly, bringing violent crime, endangering young children, and exposing the public to dangerous chemicals and toxins. I look forward to working with you to identify meth production labs quickly as well as finding the best ways—through legislation and prosecution—to cut off the supplies, the means, and the incentives for meth use and distribution.

In my first weeks in office, I laid out some of the issues that I consider special priorities for my time as Attorney General, in addition to our top priority of protecting America against terrorism. These other priorities include:

- **Advancing the President's Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative,**
- **Prosecuting obscenity,**
- **Protecting victims' rights,**
- **Stopping human trafficking,**
- **Dealing with gangs, and**
- **Continuing the war on drugs.**

In each of these areas of crimefighting, success depends on cooperation and coordination. We know that this kind of unity in the justice community allows us to seize the initiative and fight crime more effectively. And this is the key.

Over the past four years, we have seen the benefits of involving every level of law enforcement in a common objective. Thanks to you, for example, we have made Project Safe Neighborhoods a tremendous success. By focusing on illegal gun crime, we have shown that more gun laws need not be the best solution to certain gun crimes, we just need to work together to enforce the laws we already have on the books.

Project Safe Neighborhoods has produced impressive double-digit increases in prosecutions of firearms violations. In addition, we have pioneered new strategies and increased the critical resources devoted to fighting crime and violence in some of our most crime-plagued areas.

With the groundwork of Project Safe Neighborhoods in place, it is time to direct these methods to new challenges. The success of Project Safe Neighborhoods is built on local information and local cooperation. Our goal now is to deploy this proven partnership of state, local, and federal law enforcement to fight the pervasive threat of gang violence.

It's clear that gangs have become an increasingly deadly threat to our neighborhoods. That's why, just last month, I announced to all the country's US Attorneys several steps to strengthen our Nation's efforts to combat gang violence and reduce crime.

First , I have established the Attorney General's Anti-Gang Coordination Committee, which will advise the Department on resource allocation, policy, and budget recommendations that will help us continue to drive down violent crime from gangs.

Second , I have asked every U.S. Attorney to appoint an Assistant U.S. Attorney to serve as the anti-gang coordinator in every district. I expect this person to prepare a comprehensive, district-wide strategy—in consultation with partners from federal and local law enforcement, social services, and community and faith-based groups—to coordinate anti-gang activity across the board.

Third , I am directing the Committee to develop a single, integrated, advanced-level training regimen. This comprehensive protocol will cover a broad range of topics from gang prevention to investigation to prisoner re-entry—and will draw on information and best practices from a variety of experts throughout the Justice Department and across the country. When these training methods are put into place, everyone striving to combat gang violence will be working from the same playbook.

These anti-gang efforts will be aided by the National Gang Threat Assessment, which was released last month. This report gives a “ground-level” view of the gang problem facing our country from those who know it well—state and local gang investigators.

The report prepared by the National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations, with the combined expertise of the FBI, the ATF, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the National Drug Intelligence Center. With a contribution from all stakeholders, especially those close to the problem at the state and local level, the Report can help us develop an effective national—and regionally appropriate—strategy to combat gang crime and violence.

One of the recommendations of the Report is to continue the partnerships already in place for the program such as Project Safe Neighborhoods.

With the strong foundation of this kind of program and the road map provided in the Gang Threat Assessment, we can now more effectively dismantle gangs and incapacitate their leaders.

Of course prosecutions are just half the story. We’d also like to enhance our prevention efforts. I’ve encouraged the U.S. Attorneys in every district to work with community and faith-based organizations to offer at-risk youth alternatives to gangs and to support re-entry programs for those released from prison—as many have already done with great success across the country. To remove the scourge of gangs—and gang violence—from the experience of our Nation’s youth, we must depend on an integrated and comprehensive approach that includes prosecution and prevention.

The proactive investigation of gangs and the long-term benefits of prevention programs are difficult to measure. I realize that the results may not be seen right away. But that doesn’t mean they aren’t worthwhile.

Gang violence is not the only thing tearing at the fabric of our neighborhoods. From street corners to websites, obscenity and child pornography rip at the heart of our moral values and too easily corrupt our communities. I’ve made it clear that I intend to aggressively combat the purveyors of obscene materials.

I am strongly committed to protecting free speech. The right of ordinary citizens—and of the press—to speak out and to express their views is one of the greatest strengths of our Republic. But, the Supreme Court has ruled that the First Amendment does not protect obscene materials. And in today’s world, those materials are often unavoidable. Enforcement is absolutely necessary if we are going to protect citizens and children from exposure to obscene materials.

As you know, individual community standards are critical to determining which cases are appropriate for prosecution. That is why your local efforts,

information, and cooperation are the best places to start in assessing what our communities need.

I have directed Department officials to carefully review federal laws to determine how we can further strengthen our hand in prosecuting obscenity. Our goal is to assess all the law enforcement methods we use—and identify the tools we may still need—to more effectively investigate and prosecute these crimes.

Unfortunately, exploitation is not limited to magazines and the electronic medium. It can be found in the form of human trafficking.

This form of modern-day slavery does not only exist in far away lands; it happens here on our shores. Aliens are smuggled into our country, held in bondage, treated as commodities, and stripped of their humanity.

Yet, with effective federal, state, and local cooperation through more than 20 antitrafficking task forces, we have shown we can uncover and prosecute this evil practice. To improve our coordination of resources and personnel, the Justice Department is providing our tough, model state legislation to the governors and legislative leaders of more than 40 states that don't yet have their own anti-trafficking laws.

More work is needed to confront this heinous crime.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are just a few of our great challenges. But with such challenges come great opportunities—opportunities to make an impact for justice and leave our mark on America.

We have a great deal of work ahead and we will need every one of our resources to get it done. But as our successes show, we can achieve great things in the service of justice when we work together.

On behalf of the President and the American people, let me once again extend my thanks. You are the strength and hope of our Nation in the war against terror, in the fight against crime, and in the pursuit of justice. Your service and sacrifice are changing America for the better.

Together we are all working to establish a Nation that is safer and more secure. We are building communities with greater freedom and opportunity for all. We are providing hope.

As the son of poor Mexican migrants, I have lived the American dream. During my travels across our beloved America I have met others who have lived the American dream. This is why we are engaged in this noble effort, to ensure that the American dream is available for our children and for future generations of American children.

May God watch over you and your families, may He continue to guide your decisions, and may He continue to bless the United States of America.

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Justice Dept. stepping up prosecutions over porn

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BY MARK SHERMAN

WASHINGTON -- Thomas Lambert made no attempt to hide the kind of videos he peddled from his Montana home -- hard-core sex tapes involving bestiality, sadomasochism and simulated rape.

There had not been a federal obscenity prosecution in Montana in at least 16 years, according to his lawyer. But Lambert was charged last spring with violating federal obscenity statutes. In pleading guilty, he joined a growing number of purveyors of pornography pursued by the Bush administration.

Since 2001, 40 people and businesses have been convicted and 20 indictments are pending, the Justice Department said. There were four such prosecutions during the Clinton administration, he said.

The Justice Department is expected to announce it is creating a special unit to focus on adult obscenity cases. "Enforcement is absolutely necessary if we are going to protect citizens from unwanted exposure to obscene materials," Attorney General Alberto Gonzales recently told federal prosecutors. *AP*