

Read by Sec. Justicia

Message of the Governor of Puerto Rico
the Hon. Rafael Hernández Colón
On the Occasion of the Kiwanis Clubs Banquet
February 24, 1973

I am delighted to have this opportunity to salute the Kiwanis Clubs of Puerto Rico for their fine contributions in Crime Prevention and to extend a warm welcome to your distinguished guest, Mr. Myles Ambrose, whose leadership in law enforcement, especially in the field of narcotics, has been truly outstanding. Under the leadership of President Nixon, the forces for peace are being strengthened day by day in the struggle against the criminal forces which threaten the security and tranquillity of our society. Mr. Ambrose's career as the revitalizer of the U.S. Customs, and now as the President's enforcer of narcotics laws, illustrates the spirit we need on the side of the law in order to emerge victorious in this struggle.

The government of Puerto Rico is making every effort to infuse that kind of spirit into our own peace forces, in a constant and unrelenting commitment to create the conditions in which the citizens of our community, secure in their life, liberty and property, can carry out the task of building a better Puerto Rico.

We intend to continue and reinforce the modernization and professionalization of the Police Forces of Puerto Rico; in conjunction with the legislature, we are in the process of instituting a thorough reform of the Penal Code of Puerto Rico; we are strengthening the office of the prosecuting attorney in the Department of Justice by filling all current vacancies, conducting training

programs to increase the professional competency of all prosecuting attorneys, sponsoring coordination and liaison between the police and government attorneys to speed up and strengthen the handling of cases before the courts, and developing a specialized unit in the Prosecutor's office for dealing with all cases involving narcotics.

We are also conducting an evaluation in depth of the use of federal funds which the Department of Justice receives through the Crime Prevention Commission to see how they can be more effectively utilized to fortify the investigative work of the Department, especially with regard to narcotics offenses.

Further, we are embarking on a comprehensive reform of our penal institutions with a view to dealing with the fact that they appear to have little positive effect on the rehabilitation of convicted felons who, at the conclusion of their sentence, return to a career of preying on society. This reform will include special emphasis on the treatment and rehabilitation of incarcerated drug addicts.

Nonetheless, government measures directed towards crime prevention, however far-reaching, can never be totally adequate to the task without the active support and participation of the citizenry. The direct involvement of law-abiding people in crime prevention is essential to its success.

It is in this crucial area that the contribution of the Kiwanis Clubs of Puerto Rico, in cooperation with the Police, has been so notably outstanding.

In six years, the Crime Stop Program, in which ordinary citizens have a means for alerting the police to suspicious activities, and which you initiated and have

nurtured with unremitting effort, has obtained the deserved support and enthusiasm of the entire community, and has grown to be one of the most successful citizen-involvement programs anywhere. This fact is symbolized by the recent achievement of one million telephone calls to the police through Crime Stop. When it comes to preventing crime, we can truly say with you, "We've got their number"! And so, on this occasion of the Sixth Annual Kiwanis Clubs Crime Stop Banquet, I would like to assure you once again of my support for, and appreciation of, your superb and public-spirited accomplishments and to urge the community to get behind this and similar citizen-involvement programs with even greater enthusiasm. Peace and security is everybody's business.

Thank you very much.