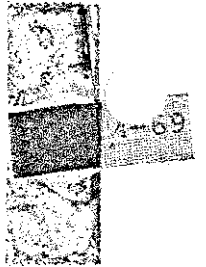


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ON THE INSTALLATION OF BUD THOMPSON AS STATE AMERICAN
LEGION COMMANDER

Speech by ROBERT MORGAN
Attorney General of North Carolina
Installation of Bud Thompson,
State Commander of The American Legion
Wilmington, North Carolina

I was pleased to receive your invitation to come to Wilmington today and participate in this ceremony. Our new State Commander is a friend of mine, and I am honored that you would ask me to share this memorable occasion with him.

I believe you have done our organization a great service in selecting Bud Thompson to lead it during the coming year. His outstanding record of service to the law enforcement profession, to his friends and neighbors here in Wilmington, and to the American Legion is well known. He certainly deserves the honor which you are bestowing upon him today.

Bud Thompson assumes this important position at a very important time in the life of our State, at a time when men of his training and background are more vital to our society than perhaps any time in many years. He has dedicated his life to the cause of law and order, to the day-to-day preservation of our rights and liberties within reasonable restraints - within the laws. His life is living testimony of the words of St. Timothy: "... the law is good if a man uses it lawfully."

As responsible citizens of this State, as proud citizens of a mighty Nation, we must concern ourselves, as never before, about this thing called "law and order" that our new Commander has dedicated his life to preserving. I hope that during his term of office he will use every opportunity to bring this problem to the attention of the people, to arouse greater popular support for law enforcement, and thus to further one of the continuing aims of the American Legion - to preserve our American way of life.

There is much crime in North Carolina today - more than is ever reported, more than is ever solved - certainly too much for the safety and health of the people of our State. Assuming this is an average day, our police and sheriffs will be informed of the murder of at least one person, the forcible rape of at least one or two women, the robbery of four people, the aggravated assault of thirty-six persons, the theft of eighteen cars, the occurrence of forty-five major thefts, and the commission of sixty-six burglaries. This is twice the number of such crimes reported on an average day in 1960. Therefore, there is much we must be concerned about.

It is easy for us to deceive ourselves into believing that most of these rising statistics must be the result of the rash of civil disorders and conflicts on our University campuses. This is not the case. An enormous variety of unlawful acts

makes up the crime problem in North Carolina and today, as never before, it is easy for the ordinary citizens like the members of this organization to be effected.

Crime in North Carolina is no longer just the burglary of an affluent home, the mugging in a dark alley, the robbery at the corner store. It includes a teenager, like mine and yours, taking a car for a joy ride as well as the professional thief stealing cars on order. It involves the dope peddler, the prostitute, the bookie, members of the Mafia and organized crime. But it also encompasses the student in our junior high, high schools and colleges who smoke marijuana for kicks. The public drunk, along with the dishonest businessman who conspires with competitors to keep prices high.

We would deceive ourselves if we believe that crime in North Carolina - or the United States - is a simple thing that can be examined, analyzed, and described in one piece. It is not, for it occurs today at every level of our society and in every part of our State and nation.

People with experience in the law enforcement profession -- men like Bud Thompson, our new State Commander - will tell you that today its practitioners and its victims are people of all ages, incomes, and backgrounds. Its trends are difficult to determine; its causes many; its cures are too often a matter of speculation and always controversial.

But involved in this problem, there is one thing which is certain. The fabric of this nation, strong and durable as

it is, cannot long withstand the internal chaos created by open lawlessness, and ever-increasing disrespect and disobedience of the law. We cannot long maintain the respect of other nations and retain a leadership role in the world if we fail to find solutions to the problems which plague us in our own backyards. Moonshots and accomplishments in space technology can be achieved by a relatively few brilliant men working together in seclusion with the proper resources, and the people of the world recognize this. But internal harmony can be insured only when the more than two hundred million Americans - individually diverse people - dedicate themselves to the same essential proposition of liberty, justice, and equality achieved through the processes and order of a free and democratic society.

The American Legion, since its inception, has been dedicated to this proposition. The men who have served in the Armed Forces of this Nation, more than anyone else perhaps, realize the benefits of our American way of life and the sacrifices which have been made to preserve it. And I know members of the American Legion who have been sent throughout the world to preserve our way of life, will not allow it to perish from within as a result of widespread lawlessness and unbridled permissiveness.

I believe it was wisdom which caused you to select a veteran law enforcement official to head your organization at this point in our history. It has been said that controlling

crime is an endeavor that will be slow and hard and costly. But America can control crime if it will. We must not assume that the control of crime is someone else's responsibility, that it can be practiced only by experts, just as medicine is practiced by doctors and law by lawyers.

A primary responsibility for controlling crime rests with the ordinary citizen, such as the members of this organization. Civil order - civilization - is essentially dependent upon moral restraints, on the respect of every citizen for law, order and our system of criminal justice. It is dependent also on the genuine respect of each citizen for the rights of others. It is dependent upon the good example of each of us in our everyday life and our support for the law enforcement officials who daily risk their safety to stand between us and the criminal element in our society.

As individuals we must support public officials who would act to combat crime. We must let them know that we believe with them that "Public order is the first business of government."

I know that such support will continue to come from the American Legion under the leadership of Bud Thompson. The Legion will continue to be the power for good government, for responsible action, that it has in the past.

Bud Thompson, who has dedicated himself to law enforcement in this City, will bring honor to the Legion for, in the words of the Psalmist, "The law of his God is in his ear, his steps shall not slip."