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PANEL — ACTION PRIORITIES OF THE FUTURE

O. J. Hawkins, Panel Moderator
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It is my pleasure to introduce our final panel.

The plan for the symposium has been indicated by the titles given to the session. We began with the review of recent progress in Project SEARCH and other national efforts. The sessions on the state of the art and major issues were designed to indicate the present status of work in those fields.

Today then we have begun to address the future. The papers given so far have illustrated some of the developing areas of activity in information and statistics in criminal justice. Juvenile justice information systems, improved crime data, and planning and evaluation models, are all receiving wide attention as we move forward.

These are not the only indicators of the future, however. The sessions yesterday provided evidence of the substantial work underway in courts and corrections as well as total criminal justice information systems.

The purpose of our final panel then, is to explore the next set of priorities from the perspective of the various parts of the criminal justice system. Our distinguished speakers represent police, courts, corrections, as well as planning for the entire criminal justice system. We have asked each speaker to outline briefly what he believes to be the highest priorities for the future in his field. Now to add a little emphasis on the short term, we have suggested that priorities should be related to the expending of funds. That is, what should we pay for next as we try to apply information and statistics to making the criminal justice system more productive and successful.
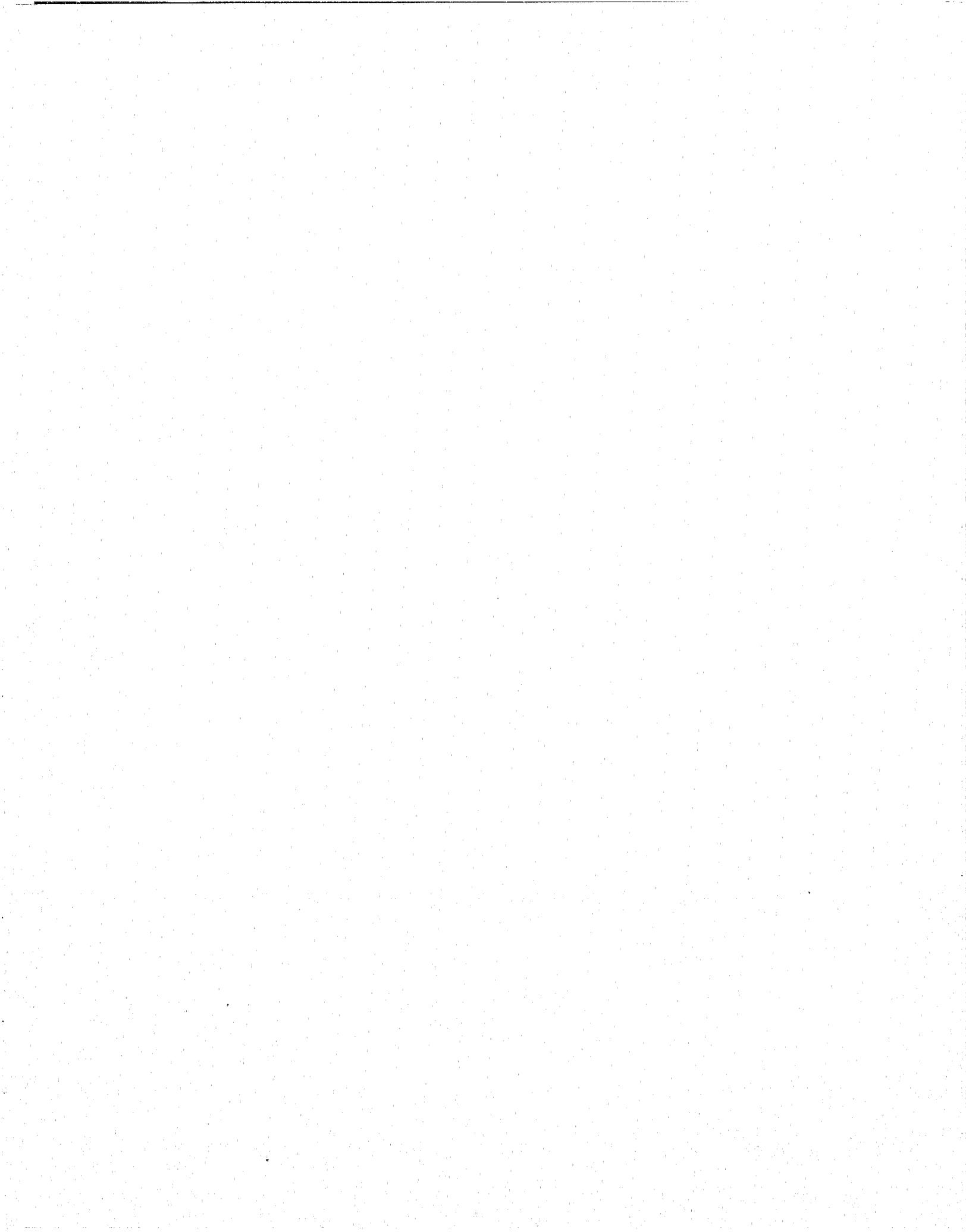
PANEL — ACTION PRIORITIES OF THE FUTURE

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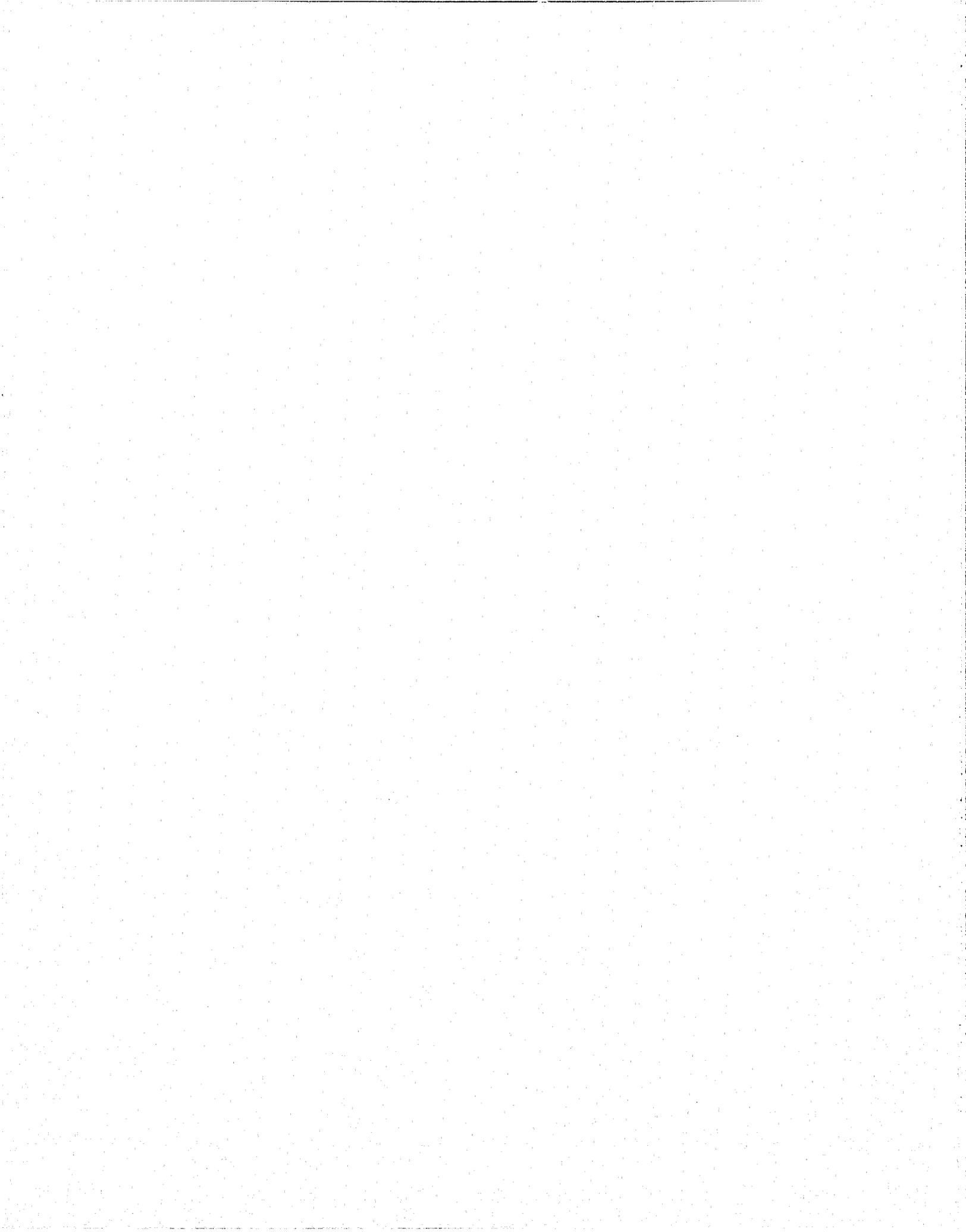
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ACTION PRIORITIES OF THE FUTURE

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The last time I attended a meeting in this city was a few months back at a meeting of chiefs of police, and I recall we were about half way through the main course of the dinner when one of the chiefs came in and apologized for his lateness by explaining that they had had a jail break, and seven dangerous felons were wandering around creating a crime wave in the city from which he came. Another chief, from a city noted for its innovative criminal justice programs, said, "Oh, we have that, too. We call it work release."

I think, perhaps, that shows that we sometimes have to get behind the labels of whatever we are doing in our tinkering around with changes in the criminal justice system and really look at the true effects of what is being done. In a word, we need to *evaluate*. Like the Ancient Mariner telling his oft-told tale, I have been preaching the need for evaluation for several years now. I got turned on to this topic when I served as a Peace Corps Director in Latin America and I looked at the programs and projects and questioned whether the Peace Corps was having much impact. It was suggested that some hard, quantifiable evaluation might be called for in place of the impressionistic and often sentimental accounts that then passed for evaluation. That idea caused anguish in the Peace Corps. People went up and down corridors saying, "But you can't measure love." Well, I was of the view that you probably could and I am still of that view.

So, I finally had my chance to try it. The Police Foundation was set up, with a generous grant from the Ford Foundation and a board of directors who shared this commitment to evaluation and were willing to put the money behind that commitment. So we find that a large part of our program money is invested in *evaluating* some traditional police practices -- preventive patrol or field interrogation, for example -- and experimenting and evaluating new police practices -- team policing, for example. In the criminal justice agencies, police or any other, the more the leadership of those agencies subscribe to an absolute commitment to objective evaluation, the more we can free ourselves from the dead-hand of some traditional practices and the more we can avoid adopting innovative practices that will become the ineffective traditional practices of the future.

There is a lack of clarity as to just what evaluation means. I don't consider myself expert enough to attempt an all-purpose definition but do have some observations based on the Police Foundation's experience to date in evaluating policing operations. There is no one methodology or design that can be applied to measuring the effectiveness of innovations or experiments. There is no "template" that can be laid on to a project. Evaluation requires adaptability. First off, real objectives and measures must be defined, and rarely are. Somebody, hopefully the head of the agency, must sit down at the very beginning and say, "Well, what do we want this thing to do? If we want to buy a helicopter, why are we buying it? If we want to institute a store front center program, what do we expect to be the outputs? And when will we know? How will we know? And by what measures will we know whether it's a success or failure and to what degree?" That kind of hard work is almost never done. One can talk to police administrators about a particular practice, field interrogation, for example. Commonly they will say, "That is, in my judgment, the greatest preventer of burglary there is." When asked, "Where is your data?" "Well, we don't have it but everybody knows that field interrogation prevents crime. Every cop knows that." To use a more significant illustration consider the whole idea of "more cops" as the answer to better crime control. Ninety-nine percent of both the profession and the population seem convinced that "more cops" is going to reduce crime but I have yet to see any evaluative data that is very convincing on that score.

A failing of many reports and studies in the police field, which purport to be evaluations, is the lack of threshold objectivity. So many of these "evaluations" that have been conducted, printed and disseminated about various police innovations have been evaluations conducted by *proponents* of the change. They are not evaluations. They are *promotions* of particular innovations in too many cases. As one police chief remarked to me, "They only tell you the good parts."

But evaluation implies something more than simply the objective measurement of an activity in terms of meeting stated objectives. Evaluation implies a posture, a willingness for self-examination, of both what you are doing and what your agency is doing. It means a sort of pervasive questioning climate. Why are we doing what we are

doing? If we try something new, let's try it so it is *genuinely experimental* and we can measure whether it is working better or not.

Well, we have tried to translate this commitment to evaluation into some practical activities of the Police Foundation. In one city, for example, we are taking preventive patrol — that vast allocation of manpower and activity that consumes so much police time and so much police budget, and is one of the most respected and honored traditions of policing — the idea of random patrol. The idea is that you catch more thieves that way, that you scare them because they don't know where you are going to be, so they don't commit crimes, and that preventive patrol makes the citizen feel more secure. We are testing this practice by working with police departments which are designing controlled experiments that, for the first time, will provide police administrators with some hard data about the effectiveness of preventive patrol.

We are trying to develop a good evaluation model of field interrogation. I was in a major city police agency recently that conducts some 240,000 field interrogations a year. Obviously it takes a lot of manpower. Obviously it could have potentially great impact on crime prevention and apprehension. Obviously it could have great impact on levels of citizens' security and levels of citizens' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the police. These are the kinds of fundamental operational practices that need to be tested and based on the results of those tests, modified, abandoned or improved.

In Cincinnati evaluations are being conducted by the Police Division, The Urban Institute and the Police Foundation (at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars) regarding the effectiveness of "team policing." Does neighborhood-based policing with different operational modes, emphasis on non-arrest alternatives, use of community service officers in integrated functions with the sworn officers, make a difference in volume of crime? Do these things make a difference in levels of citizens' satisfaction? And, obviously, given the prevailing unreliability of reported crime figures, the evaluations must go behind the usual crime reporting mechanisms and do victimization surveys.

In the District of Columbia the police department is testing the effectiveness of women as police officers. Many police departments have either been sued or face the possibility of law suits alleging that their selection and promotion practices are discriminatory, not only on the basis of race but on the basis of sex. The Metropolitan D.C. police department has had the courage to take 100 policewomen and put them on general patrol, riding with male officers, handling all calls. That experiment is being evaluated very closely with observers taking a look at field performance, with attitude surveys of male officers, the female officers, citizens, families and spouses of the officers, and we hope to have enough data so that the chief of police can make a decision sometime next year as to whether the Civil Service lists should be merged or whether there are substantial proven differences in field performance of male and female officers.

This is a symposium about information systems and the group in this room represents a national fraternity which controls one of the essential ingredients of evaluation. You control the *data*. And in all these evaluation efforts that the Police Foundation, LEAA and local agencies have undertaken, one immediately runs head-on into the absence of some kinds of key data. Things are in much better shape now than they have been in the past. More data is more readily available. Data which can be manipulated in more ways is coming out, but there are still some very large data gaps.

We tried to look recently at what the cops do in that big category called "disturbance," or "other" or "disputes." Different departments have different labels for it and it always constitutes a substantial proportion of the police work load. But there is virtually no data. You can't find out how many of those are husband-wife fights, how many of those are father-son fights, how many of those are quarrels between neighbors, how many are barking dogs, and how many are mental cases. They are just all lumped there together. Not only can you not break them up that way but you can't figure out what the cops do. If you say, "How do you handle a particular type of behavior, a rowdy gang of kids?", you are going to have to go to street officers and get seven different answers as to how that situation is handled. And yet it's as important a part of policing as the traditional law enforcement or crime control aspects. It is the part that brings them in contact with more citizens and in potentially helpful or potentially abrasive contexts, and we simply have no idea what goes on. And I think police management has traditionally sort of not focused on how these calls were being dealt with. Progressive police leadership today is saying, "We must get a handle on this."

I had a chief of a major city say to me recently, "I need a management information system that feeds back to me what is happening on the street. I need to know whether there is harassment. I need

to know whether there is adherence to due process. I need to know whether there is fictitious report writing. And I need to know this, not in a sense of punishing officers and disciplining officers, I need to know this in the sense of having what a management information system is supposed to provide, the data for management decisions, so that I can shape my training programs, my selection programs, my assignment practices, etc., to improve street performance." And it is a plaintive note that here the guy sits at the head of a police agency, a very able police administrator, and he can't find out what's happening on the street. That's a big data hole.

Another data hole we have run into is one that is well known to all of you and that is, the adequacy of the present crime reporting systems. The District of Columbia has recently been a much-publicized example of this problem. Ernst & Ernst came in and conducted an audit of a three year period of D.C.'s crime statistics and found, according to newspaper accounts, that in one year there were 67,000 offenses reported by the department but there were actually 84,000 that should have been reported. And this is in a department that has made a really serious effort to ensure the integrity of its crime statistics. The audit, however, did find that the rate of decrease over the three year period was about the same as the department had reported. Other newspaper reporters and statistical experts have kind of taken a look at the D.C. situation and have come out with very conflicting views on the accuracy of the figures. One cannot help but feel sorry for the chief of police who bears the burden of an inadequate national crime reporting system. We just can't be sure anywhere in the United States under the existing system whether crime is up or down and certainly we can't be sure why, and that's where evaluation comes in. With LEAA's emphasis on crime specific projects, with the High Impact Program, with a lot of increasing money going into saturation patrol efforts, street lighting efforts, etc., it makes evaluation and the assembling of new data bases essential. Millions will be spent on street lights alone, and somebody better be finding out pretty soon what difference that makes. I should note that LEAA has taken the commendable step of funding major victimization surveys and other evaluative efforts which will begin to help fill this data gap.

The final big hole in data is the citizens' viewpoint. Very rarely do we go out and ask the guy who got arrested, or the wife who called the cops to break up the family fight, or the kid who was picked up for violating curfew, or just John Q. Citizen, whose only contact with the police is to see him at the downtown intersection, what he thinks about the police, what his experience has been, and to try to get some feed-back to improve police performance. And I think that that should be almost a standard part of any criminal justice agency operation — and yet it is rarely done.

I know Donald Pomerleau, the Police Commissioner in Baltimore, did some citizen surveys and found them very helpful. I know Mike Canlis, the Sheriff in San Joaquin County, conducts surveys of citizen attitudes on a sampling basis fairly routinely. But those tend to be the exception rather than the rule. In our evaluation activities we have had to spend a great deal of money on citizen survey work. Some of the LEAA's sponsored victimization survey work, which also has some citizen attitude questions in it, will begin to provide some needed insights. But I think it is an unavoidable and primary responsibility of the police agency or the criminal justice agency head to make sure that citizen feedback is regularly obtained.

Many times the question is asked, "Well, what if the evaluation says a particular activity or project 'works' or 'doesn't work'," and one must answer that evaluations don't make your decisions for you. Almost nothing is that clear. If it is that clear you can kind of evaluate it with your eyeballs — and your intuitions — you don't need all this data. What evaluation does provide is much greater analytical insights into what is working and what is not working and by what measures and toward what goals things are working and not working, and improves immensely the quality of decision making as a result. For example: the so-called "24-hour car" plan was subjected to an objective and high-quality evaluation. The police department's primary program goal was crime reduction. The evaluation suggests that the 24-hour car plan did not have great impact on crime, except perhaps on auto theft, but one of the spin-off benefits uncovered by the evaluation was that the program had strong effects on improving officer morale. Other cities which have considered adopting the program have been able to assess objectives not set forth in the original goals but objectives which are, nevertheless, valid. Evaluation contributes to this kind of flushing out what you are doing as matched with what you are trying to do. Many police agencies have bought helicopters, again presumably as a crime control device, but I suspect that if you got at the true objectives and impact of these agencies you would find that improved

public relations, giving the citizens a greater sense of security, the pride and morale in the department itself in being innovative and progressive, are objectives – and legitimate objectives — which are equally as important as crime control.

I will just add one final word about money. The Police Foundation, with its limited resources, has committed, thus far, substantially more than $1,000,000 to evaluation. That may give some idea of the magnitude of expenditure required by a commitment to evaluation. It is not cheap. But, on the other hand, if we take something like preventive patrol and look at the resources presently allocated to it then one can say the evaluation is indeed cheap. So I simply bring my Ancient Mariner's tale to you and say, "Please, please, make sure that changes in present operations in the agencies in which you are working or with which you are dealing are subjected to this kind of searching inquiry, that you are alert to the need to develop new data elements that can serve these purposes, and that we may finally begin to have an atmosphere in the criminal justice system in which rationality rather than tradition prevails."

ACTION PRIORITIES OF THE FUTURE

Dr. Don M. Gottfredson, Director
National Council on Crime and Delinquency
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Davis, California

I was asked to focus on information systems in the area of Corrections, which I would take to refer, at least, to jails, probation, prisons, and parole. I would like to raise three questions with you and to attempt to give my answers to those three questions. I am not too confident of the adequacy of my answers but I trust they are the right three questions and will serve for later discussion.

The three questions are:

Where are we?
Where do we want to be? and
How do we know that we are getting there?

These are simple questions, but the answers may be quite complex.

Before talking about "Where are We?" I'd like to reveal some of my own bias with respect to the topic of information systems. Also, I must admit my trepidation in talking about them with a group of experts on the topic, since I am not one. Giving some definitions will show my bias and at least set the focus for my remarks.

The words, "information" and "systems," are used with a variety of different meanings. The experts don't always agree on them. So I'd like to mean by "information" that which reduces uncertainty with respect to decisions, and by the word "system" I'd like to mean simply a set of procedures to provide information to decision makers in a reliable, timely fashion. By "reliable" I would simply mean that independent observers agree in providing the same data from the same observations. By "timely" I mean that the information is provided in advance of the decision.

It would be useful to look at what is meant by "decision." I would like to use that term to refer to a choice among alternative strategies on the basis of information (as defined previously) with respect to some goal or goals. If you look at a decision this way it seems clear that any decision has three aspects. A decision does have a goal or set of goals. There are alternatives. There is, presumably, some information that is relevant to the achievement of the goals by the choice among the alternatives.

In Corrections we talk about making large expenditures for information. But we certainly do not have a large expenditure for information as just defined. We have a lot of data collection in Corrections, but we have very little investment (in energy or resources) in trying to relate the data collected to the goals that we wish to achieve. We invest little in alternative strategies. As a result, we have very little information.

Decisions generally are of two types. There are program decisions and there are individual decisions. Our first speaker this morning, I think, conveyed that he is interested in developing a dual purpose information system to serve both program decision needs and individual decision needs. Program decision questions in Corrections could refer, for example, to whether there is a need to build new institutions, whether there is a need to augment or curtail the use of work-release type programs, or half-way house programs, or whether there is a need to increase or decrease resources going into vocational training programs in institutions. Each case involves a general program and a class of people, or a group of people. But what really gives the word "system" meaning, in the larger sense of the term, as so many speakers have indicated in the last two days, is that decisions also are made about individuals. Many of these, in Corrections, are placement decisions such as the decision whether to place the individual on probation or not; whether he goes to jail or not; if he does go to probation, whether he goes to an intensive case load or some specialized case load, or to a minimal supervision case load and so on. Many examples of individual placement decisions could, of course, be given.

Now, within this framework we may ask, "Where are we?" The short form answer has to be that we have bits and pieces and we have good starts and useful models — but that is all. For example: We now know how many jails there are in the country. If it boggled George Hall's mind, as he said this morning, to realize that police departments do not have data on arrests by census tracts, I wonder what he thought when he came to LEAA and found that no one could tell him how many jails there were in the United States! Through his efforts, those of his staff, and of the United States Census Bureau there is now a Directory of Jails. This certainly is a start, and also there are places in the United States where people have developed beginnings of information systems for jails.

There is no national data collection program for the area of probation. There are, of course, useful starts — such as the program of the California Bureau of Criminal Statistics. There is also a start, in the LEAA funded "Bay Area Counties Probation Research Program," conducted by the Research Center of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency and Public Systems, Inc.

For data on prisons, nationally, there is no adequate resource. Among the states where there is a statistical department, different definitions are used, and different data elements. As with probation, there is a lack of uniform reporting to enable an interfacing of these programs. We have had in this country for many years a National Prisoners' Statistics Program providing what data there is concerning prisoners. It has always been inadequately funded; it always apparently has had a low priority. There are many problems within that system. It was discouraging to read the National Institute's priority list and find that it was not included as having, in that planning document, any priority for the future. There is a very great need for furthering the development of that program, and also for achieving an interfacing across the different prison systems of this country. It is encouraging, on the other hand, to know that there is concern about that in the Statistics Division of the National Institute, and that they are planning toward improving the NPS program.

We have a uniform parole reports program now which includes collaboration of all the paroling authorities of the United States. The contribution of data has been developed over the last seven years by the Research Center of NCCD through collaboration with paroling authorities. The system, supported for six years by NIMH and this year by LEAA, contains data collected uniformly across jurisdictions. There is some evidence that the data is reasonably reliable. The system includes some opportunity to follow up people while they are under parole supervision, to determine outcomes.

We have no facility in this country to provide the resource for following people uniformly across the United States either after completion of parole or upon discharge from institutions.

We have very little information concerning juvenile detention, juvenile probation, or youth institutions in the United States. Thus, little is being done in these areas although again it may be said that useful models are developing in some jurisdictions which can be helpful to others in developing juvenile information.

We have now the Project SEARCH model for a Statewide Criminal Justice Statistical System based on an Offender-Based Transaction Model. This surely is a model needed if the system is ever to serve needs for both program decisions and individual decisions; but that system can only be described now as an extremely bare-bones model. I am sure it is regarded that way by its authors and by the Statistics Committee that guided that work. It is extremely bare-bones, especially, in Corrections. As an illustration of this there is no code within the field for people leaving prison to indicate parole as the method of release. I would ask, at least, for a code, if not an entire field; and certainly you can get into a considerable complexity of data that you would want to have if you were to attempt seriously following up people on parole to determine their outcomes.[1] Although I describe the SEARCH model as "bare-bones," it is, of course, an extremely useful beginning.

Let me ask then, "Where do we want to be?" I would hope that the answer is implied by my definitions of information and systems and that brief discussion of decisions. The question could be discussed in terms of the two categories of decisions. For program decisions the need is for a greatly expanded transaction-based tracking system, expanded in terms of data elements with respect to each transaction which will permit the examination of system rates. The need additionally is to permit a search for determinants of changes in those system rates. This should be pursued so that we can look at those system rates and their determinants at each decision point that seems of special pertinence throughout this continuum and with respect to measurements of each of the objectives that might be defined. Then, for individual decisions, we need the same kind of thing. The major problem confronting Corrections and decision makers in Corrections (and I suspect this is likewise true of law enforcement and the courts) is the lack of information for rationally answering the general question of what kind of placement, treatment or control measure works best with respect to specified kinds of objectives with demonstrably different kinds of offenders. That's very quickly said but rapidly can differentiate into a very complex set of issues.

There is a myth current in the field of Corrections that we now know that nothing works. Actually the situation has not been adequately studied, because we have never had the resource that readily can be envisioned from a greatly expanded offender-based transaction system.

Now, the third question was, "How do we know that we are getting there?" and I don't know that we do know that. Generally, there are two great needs with respect to Corrections and the future of informational systems. The first is the need for an overall plan to coordinate and integrate the progress that has been made and is now being made in order to expand the transaction-based system to include information development for decision making. As an example, consider taking the SEARCH model, the National Prisoner Statistics, the Uniform Parole Reports model, and the various probation statistics programs and seriously look at the problem of interfacing these, one within another, eventually to provide the larger, more complete system that can be envisioned. The second general need is for expanding that model, certainly to include youth, and then to expand it to include misdemeanants. A good case might be made that we have begun with adults and with felons, because that's easier. It probably is. But it might be even more important to develop that system for youth; and it might be a very important thing to develop for misdemeanant offenders.

In summary, where are we? We have a good start, but nowhere do we have the expanded, complete system that we can envision. We can only dream about information systems that truly provide guidance to decision making, concerning both program decisions and individual placement decisions. That's where we want to be. If we ask how we know we are getting there, we immediately will be confronted with what may seem to be an overwhelming, complex task. If we are ever to approach the system we can envision, it is clear that many of the people who will have to do the work are in this room. That work will be extremely costly, not only in money but in hard work and dedication. Clearly, envisioning the system in this way might seem impractical and not at all feasible.

So I ask you to remember a story of the Emperor of China centuries ago. He was wandering in the woods and came upon a beautiful, sturdy oak tree. He looked at that tree and thought, "I need one of those in the center of the courtyard back at the palace. It will be a beautiful thing. It will provide many benefits to the people. I must have that in my courtyard." So he went back to the palace, called his senior advisors together and told them about this. "I want that tree, that beautiful, big, sturdy oak tree in the center of the courtyard." They looked at one another almost in disbelief and finally one ventured to say, "Your Highness, we understand it would be tremendous to have that; but, you know, it takes hundreds of years to grow a tree like that." And the Emperor said, "Oh, it takes that long? Then we had better plant it right away."

1 This, inadvertently, was an exaggeration. There is a code showing parole as the system entered by the offender.
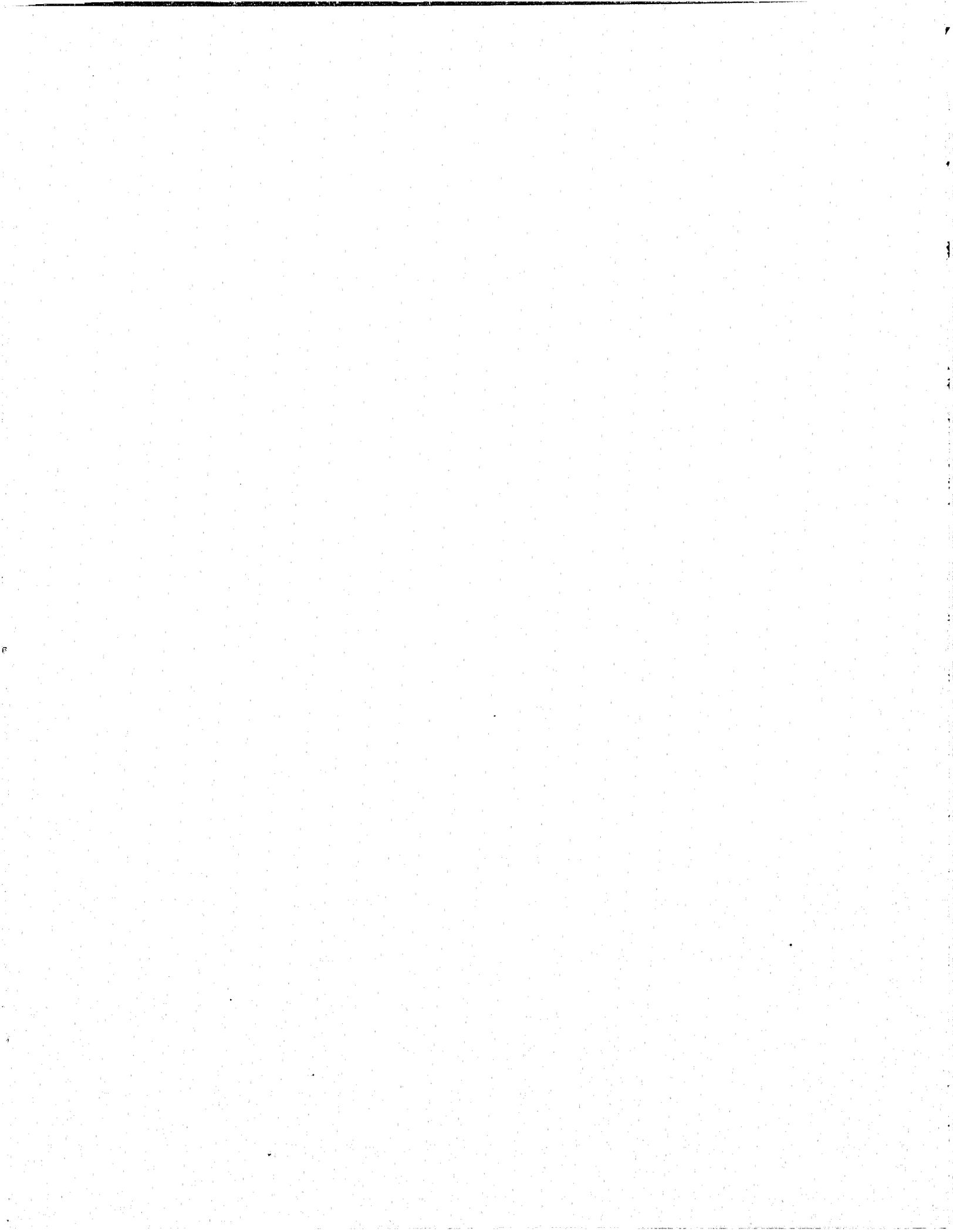
ACTION PRIORITIES OF THE FUTURE

Peter R. Gray, Deputy Director
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Office of the Mayor, New York

I do not intend to rank-order priorities for SEARCH in the future, but I would like to indicate one area which, I think, could use a good deal more attention on the part of SEARCH and all of its participants. I think this attention could be given without diminishing SEARCH efforts in other areas. As indicated by my introduction, I speak with the bias of a planner, but the need I wish to describe should be of equal concern to those who have responsibility for operating criminal justice agencies.

The best way to introduce my topic is by using as an example the current program in Offender Based Transaction Systems, OBTS, but the point I wish to make goes far beyond this example as I shall try to illustrate.

Many states are counting on deriving the criminal justice statistics that they are going to use for a variety of purposes from the very comprehensive data systems that they are developing for other purposes, particularly the maintenance of accurate criminal histories. The argument for adopting this strategy was explained very clearly by the representative from Florida when the SEARCH statistics project was presented to this Symposium. He pointed out that most of the data elements of interest are the same whether you are discussing computerized criminal histories or offender based transaction systems. It follows, therefore, that it is only economically sensible to derive those statistics from a system that is being developed anyway for the purpose of providing computerized criminal histories.

Mr. Beattie suggested in the same session that there are serious problems with this approach, and that he is very skeptical as to whether it will work. I must admit I share some of his skepticism, but that is not my point today. Assuming this strategy will work, most speakers conceded that it would be quite some time until the kinds of statistics that one desires from an OBTS system will be available. In the meantime, many of us will continue to make decisions concerning criminal justice policy without the benefits of these data. My point is that some of these needs for criminal justice statistics could be met sooner if we were not concentrating entirely on the development of very comprehensive

systems. The strategy I am suggesting is fairly obvious, and commonplace (at least outside of criminal justice), and that is the use of sample studies. I suggest that Project SEARCH consider stimulating a good deal more of the sample-study kind of effort, even while it is concentrating the majority of its resources in its longer-term development efforts.

In the last three days, we have heard over and over again all the wonderful things that we could learn, if only we had adequate statistics systems. But we have heard almost nothing about statistics that have been made available, analyses that have been performed with them, or policies which might have come as a result of having better criminal justice statistics.

I have used OBTS as an example since it has been discussed so much at this Symposium. But there are many other examples that would be equally valid. I will cite a couple. In New York City two years ago, we did a sample study of the 1968 arrest population in order to examine the release-on-recognizance (ROR) criteria then in use, and to explore the consequences of alternative criteria. Many professionals in Probation have suggested that they should have a very complete information system which would handle among other things the data that are obtained in the ROR interview. Once they had such a system they would be able to derive the kind of statistics necessary to do the study we did on a sample basis. All of this would be fine, and perhaps it will come to pass some day, but in the meantime it makes sense to go ahead with sample studies that can provide statistically valid information for policy decisions that need not await the development of the ultimate system. The same comments would apply to studies of sentencing practice or even to studies of alternative calendaring systems. In these and numerous other examples, a comprehensive information system might allow the data of interest to be spun-off with relatively little effort. But in many circumstances it does not make sense to wait until the comprehensive system is functioning.

There is another reason for moving ahead with sample studies even while we are developing comprehensive systems, and that is that we could use the experience of trying to use the results of these studies. If I may return to the OBTS example, speaker after speaker in this symposium lauded the

OBTS concept, but almost none of them has yet had the opportunity to utilize OBTS in any of the virtuous ways he has described. In fact, most concede that this will not be possible for some years.

One speaker yesterday, in the session on criminal justice planning, spoke at length of the virtues of OBTS and cited a number of interesting questions that a criminal justice administrator or planner should be able to answer. He went on to allege that these questions would be answerable once an OBTS system is functioning, and could not have been answered before OBTS. He was wrong on both counts. Some of his sample questions could not be answered by an OBTS system as it has been defined in this Symposium. Others of his sample questions were answerable by traditional aggregate statistics that have been available for some time. Of course, some of his sample questions could only be answered by OBTS, as he alleged.

My point is simply that while we talk a lot about the potential benefits of the criminal justice statistics we are trying to develop, we still have relatively little experience in actually using them. We would learn a great deal if some of the people who are in the position of making decisions, creating plans, or running agencies, were confronted fairly soon with the kinds of data and analyses that we look forward to having in the future. They would learn a lot about what they could and could not expect to get from such systems, and surely this experience would have a beneficial impact on the

design and implementation of the systems we are now developing.

I recognize that this proposal is a little different from many of the SEARCH projects, but I think there are some similarities. We have had a number of projects in which we have demonstrated the feasibility of this or that. In many cases there was not really any question about whether or not it was feasible. We knew before we started that you could get criminal histories out of a computer, and that you could send them to another computer, but with the SEARCH effort we learned a lot about the problems that go with this exchange, about user needs and policies, and about data capture problems. The first SEARCH statistics project taught us much about the problems of merging data from different criminal justice agencies, and that experience was a useful one. What I am suggesting is that we should also experiment with giving criminal justice statistics, and the ability to do some analyses, to planners and administrators now, while we are still in the developmental stages with all of these projects. I think this would be quite consistent with the overall spirit of SEARCH, and, indeed, would enhance many of the other SEARCH efforts.

Succeeding in that, I would hope that the next time this Symposium is convened there will be some papers in which we will hear about policy changes that have been made and programs that have been started as a result of the analysis of criminal justice statistics.

ACTION PRIORITIES OF THE FUTURE

Colonel John R. Plants
Director
Michigan State Police

What I'm going to discuss with you today, very briefly, is the final report of the Task Force on Information Systems and Statistics of the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals.

Those of you who were here the first day remember that Tom Madden talked to you about the Commission in general, its goals, and how it was organized. I was fortunate enough to be named Chairman of the Task Force on Information Systems and Statistics. It's a field in which I am very interested. I have been in it now for seven years. One of the first things that we did after the Task Force was established was to meet in Washington, like all good Federal Task Forces, and the Commission was broken up into four major task forces, police, courts, corrections, and prevention. I don't like to be called a minor task force, but there were also some eight minor task forces, of which Information Systems and Statistics was one.

We met with our task force in Washington and tried to design a horse by committee which, obviously, began turning out as a camel. As a result, we hired a consultant with a great deal of background in information systems. That was PSI. I am sure you have all heard the story of the consultant, the doctor and the minister who were out fishing and they were catching a lot of fish but the wind kept blowing them offshore. After about an hour, it came to them that they were a mile and a half from shore, so they tried to start the engine and it wouldn't start. It became obvious that one of them was going to have to swim to shore. After some discussion, it was decided that the consultant would swim for shore so he dove overboard and started swimming. He got about 80 yards from the boat when some sharks appeared. The sharks were swimming around him and he was swimming toward shore, and the sharks were circling and he was swimming, and the sharks were circling. Finally, he got out of sight and the two remaining fishermen got the binoculars out. To shorten the story, he made shore and stood up on shore and waved back at the boat. The minister said, "By golly, that's a miracle!" and the doctor said, "No, that's just professional courtesy!" That's being facetious, really. I use consultants quite a bit. PSI did a very good job for us.

The committee has met twice since then to review its work, and what you see now is a final draft. I'm sorry that I'm not a little better prepared, but I did not get this until day before yesterday and it's not annotated, so all these little pieces of paper are my notes which I am trying to skim for you to elicit what I think would be most interesting for this group.

I want you to understand that when I go through some of these standards you ought to have the benefit of the commentary that goes with, and sometimes modifies, them. You are given a kind of synopsis of these standards, but, I think, before you make any real decisions as to whether you think they are good or bad, you ought to read the commentary. Another point is that these are not final. They will be presented to the National Commission at a meeting in San Diego in November, again providing that the Task Force does agree with all of them. I feel we have met enough times that there would not be any major disagreements regarding what is in here. So in November, we propose to offer them to the Commission as the report from the Task Force. But until that time, they are not final and it is our hope that if LEAA accepts the findings of the Commission that this will then become the funding policy for Information Systems and Statistics for LEAA.

The report is broken up into some eleven chapters which include something just under sixty final standards. I think the ones that would interest you the most are the chapters on judicial responsibility, which lay out standards for a state, local, and national interface of systems. The report also breaks down what the state standards would be. Among them it says that each state should establish a criminal justice information system that provides the following services on: line files; computerized criminal history files; interfaces with other state files such as driver and vehicle records; interface with national systems such as NCIC. It goes on in that category.

Local standards — every locality should be served by a local criminal justice information system which, and I think this is important, supports the intra-agency needs of criminal justice agencies. Let me say that when I talk about local, state and national, we are suggesting that this is a maximum decentralization and not necessarily a standard for every state to follow. We are suggesting that if you do set these up that they be the

maximum decentralization that you allow in your states. The local criminal justice contains information concerning every person arrested within that locality from the time of arrest until no further criminal justice transactions can be expected within that locality. In other words, we are saying those kinds of criminal justice activities with which the local governments are still concerned ought to be held at that local level.

Below the local level — I'm giving you a very, very quick run through on some of these. We are suggesting that larger local areas may have need for what we call a component information system or CIS. The component information system should provide the rationale for the internal allocation of personnel and other resources for components of the criminal justice agency in that area. The CIS is designed to support the intra-agency needs in that local area, such as courts, corrections, and police. We are not suggesting that every area needs this. We are saying that in some large metropolitan areas it may be feasible. If it is established then we are suggesting some standards for establishment; there are standards in here that suggest what kinds of files should be kept at the state level and at the local level and in the CIS components.

There are some eight major standards in the police area dealing with crime analysis capability, manpower resource allocation, UCR participation, the quality of crime data geo-coding. There are some additional eight standards in the courts area dealing with decision making, case counting, or suggesting a method of counting cases so that all courts can be counting the same way (so that we are not comparing apples and oranges), research and evaluation in court procedures, case management for prosecutors, transactional data elements. There are nine suggested standards in the corrections area, such as the development of a corrections data base, an inmate statistical data system, and institutional experience data. One of the things that will be of interest, I think, to many people here is the section that deals with the data collection system for the offender base transaction system in each state. I think that it goes, in some cases, into a great deal of detail. I believe the detail is necessary in many cases because states and local areas struggling for standards then will have a design for at least some large parameters that they can hold their systems up next to and decide whether they do or whether they do not fit.

The chapter on the offender base transaction system has such non-controversial items as a separation of computer files, the dedication of

computer systems, the availability of criminal justice information, who should or should not get criminal justice information. These are all non-controversial.

One of the major chapters which we have deals with security and privacy, and a great deal of the information in there comes from sources that you have already been discussing here through the seminar, that is, the SEARCH Project and other related documents. I have yet to find more definitive and expository types of reports on privacy and security in this information system area than those SEARCH has done. And let me say that I was in SEARCH from the beginning and there were some great controversies inside the SEARCH Committee as to what that report should be. I differed with Bob Gallati quite a bit on some of the things that were written into that report. Let me say that I was wrong. That privacy and security committee did a tremendous service to all of us in this public information business.

One of the standards I might read for you in this area, because it is somewhat controversial, is one of the principles that the committee follows in developing some other standards, that is, the principle of information holding. Let me read it:

"The first principle of system integration holds that identical records should not be contained within two separate repositories unless there are strongly overriding considerations of total system efficiency to be gained thereby."

And what that means is that we do not believe in our committee that there should be, for instance, historical criminal histories kept at the local level unless there are some overriding reasons, such as the inability of the state to provide the services.

We get down into suggesting common identifiers, that is, common data elements, in those areas requiring common data elements where a record goes through several components of a criminal justice system, so that a man does not come into the state system or the national system with thirty-five numbers, none of them cross-referenced to the other. We are suggesting that they have, to the extent possible, single sources of data collection so that there are not a dozen separate data collection reports following the subject through the central data-base transaction system. Therefore, when a man leaves the police component he doesn't suddenly acquire a whole new set of identifiers and statistics when he goes into the court component. I think these are things that those of you who have been in this information business for some years will not disagree with.

One of the things that I think will please the planners is that there is a chapter which deals with

evaluation. We agree with a great deal of what was said here as far as evaluation and planning is concerned.

I somewhat agree with Dr. Gray. I worked once in the governor's office dealing with pollution and we had an expert on pollution from Washington who was in the office, and he said, "There are two kinds of people who look at these programs and there is an analogy in the police business." He said, "One type of person looks at a piece of raw sewage floating down the river and he gets out a pencil and he says, 'Now I wonder what that's composed of, and I wonder where it came from, and I wonder how long it will take to break down, and I wonder when it breaks down how long will it take to dissolve, and I wonder when it dissolves what the impact would be on the community.'" He said,

"The second type of man will look at it and see that raw piece of sewage and say, 'Get it the hell out of there." So there are two kinds, really, and I think I agree with Dr. Gray in that we have to have both kinds. We have to have in some of these cases the ability to "Get it the hell out of there", but we also have to have evaluation techniques and planning techniques to determine really what we are doing.

One of the things in this particular report is a process for suggestions for standards for monitoring what you are doing before you start a system, monitoring what you do while you are implementing it, and then evaluating its impact on the community or the crime problem after you have this implementation in process. We think that one of the most important things in this report is the evaluation technique.
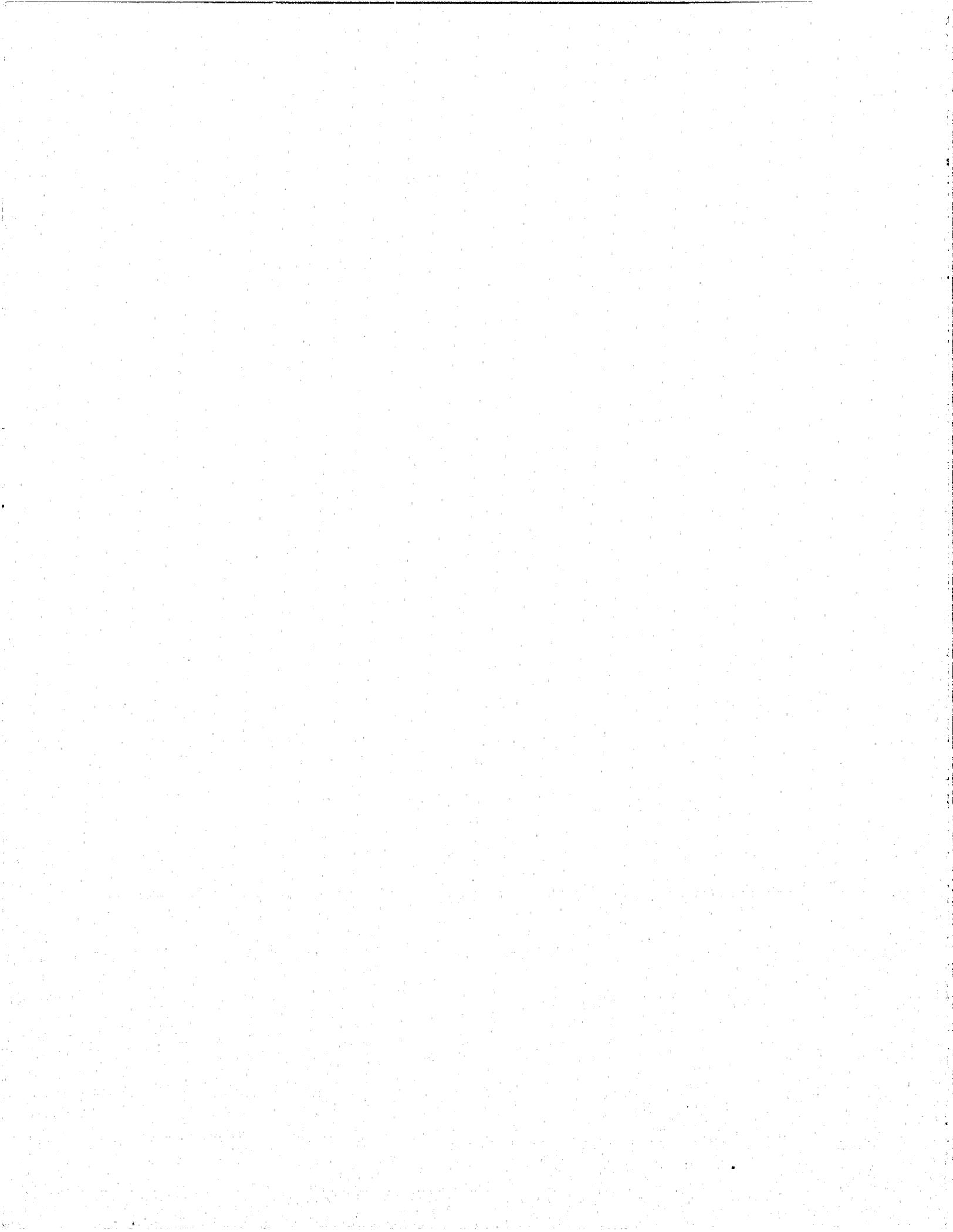
ACTION PRIORITIES OF THE FUTURE

Ernest H. Short
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National Center for State Courts
Washington, D.C.

I received a call a few weeks ago, and was asked to present the courts' perspective as part of this panel presenting "Action Priorities for the Future." In order to permit audience interaction at the conclusion of my comments, I will keep my remarks brief and try to stay within the allotted ten minutes. I'll not tell you anything about the National Center for State Courts since I'm sure you all know what a great operation it is, anyway.

For the last two and a half days I've been listening to sessions in which the speakers talked about information and statistics systems in the criminal justice area. I've almost come to the conclusion that no matter which agency you're connected with, unless you have an innovative, automated, interactive, predictive, crimes specific information system then you can't be called a criminal justice agency. The future of information and statistics systems in the courts is the implementation of presently designed state-of-the-art information systems and of presently designed state-of-the-art equipment.

I will present four priority items, numbered one through four; but these numbers are for identification purposes and do not signify any ranking of the priorities. For each of these priorities I'll approach a few considerations of the suggestion I'm making.

Priority I. Design, development and implementation of operational management information systems for the courts. In making this suggestion, I do not suggest in any manner that you approach a court system simply to automate existing information systems. In many cases you don't need to automate. I think the approach should be to, first of all, define the specific information needs within that particular court system. These information needs should take into account the requirements of the people within the system, people who use the information in collected form, and the public. The information needs of all users need to be defined and standardized to the greatest extent possible.

There is a tremendous need for programs to define and standardize terminology. Exactly what does everybody mean when he says "statistic?" What is a statistic? Does a statistic in one jurisdiction vary from a statistic in another jurisdiction? If I give a judge in Portland, Oregon, a statistic I got from the Washington, D.C. court system, can he make the same interpretation of that statistic that I intended when I got it from the Washington D.C. system?

Furthermore, I think there is a tremendous need, when developing these court management information systems, to determine the "expected pay-off" of the system and to develop future systems in light of these "expected pay-offs". Some may wish to call this a cost/benefit analysis. I think that once the funding, if ever it does, begins to slow down or maybe even, in the farthest stretches of our imagination, ceases; then there will be a shock in many criminal justice agencies when they realize that these systems really do cost all that money that they have been spending.
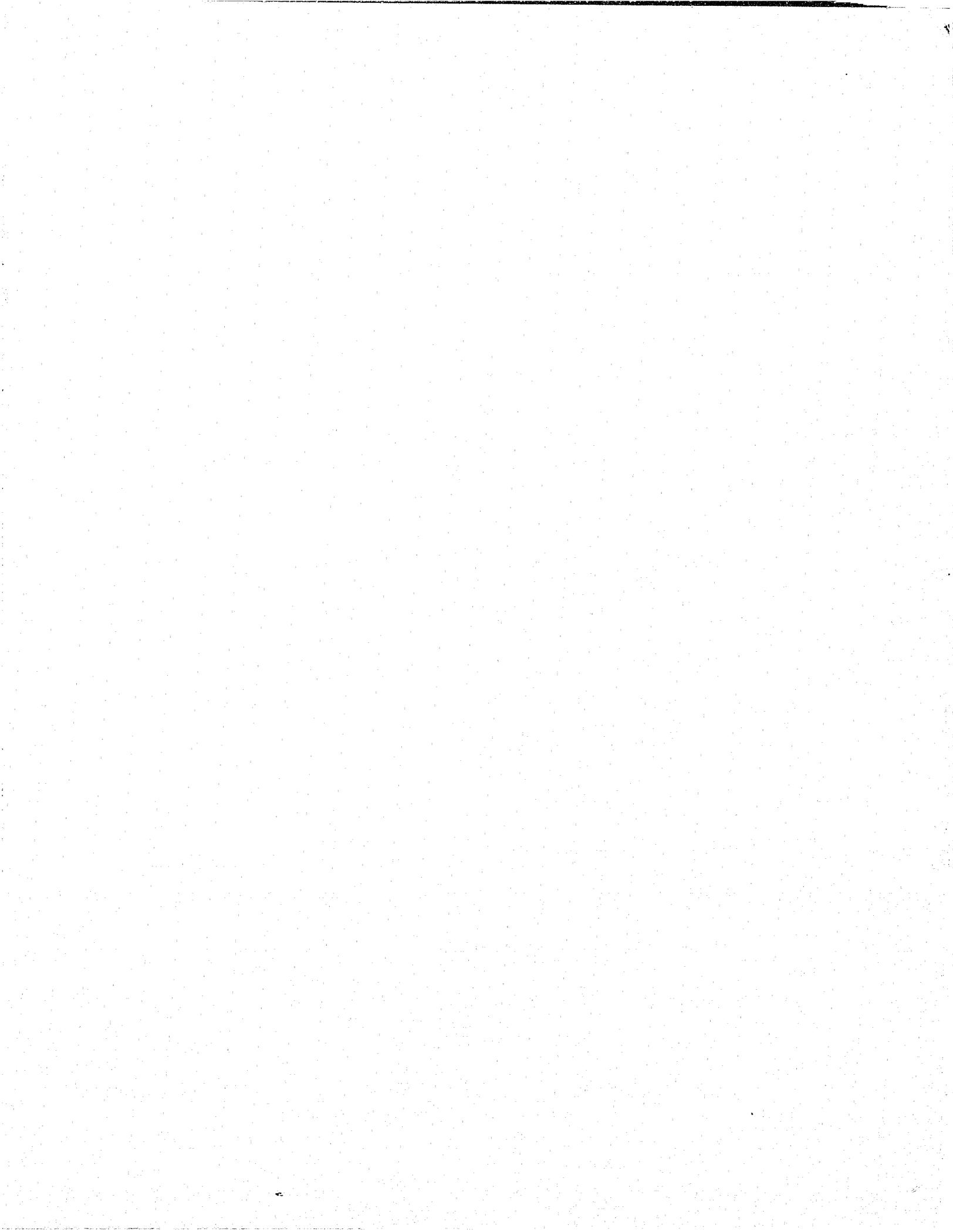
Priority II. Based on efficiency and effectiveness, strong consideration should be given to designing future courts' information systems on a regional basis. Again, this approaches the widely accepted concept of what pay-off you expect to receive from a system. This probably puts us right in the middle of the argument between dedicated and shared systems, and points up the lack of definition of exactly what we mean by dedicated and shared. I, personally, see no problem with the sharing of equipment and, to some extent, software between criminal justice agencies. I do, however, see an extreme problem in the sharing of entire data banks across criminal justice agencies. I suggest that anytime regional criminal justice information systems are set up, strong consideration be given to the need for, at least, the appearance of judicial independence. The immediate picture of the criminal justice system, which comes to the mind of the individual on the street when he suddenly finds himself involved in it, is that of a monolithic operation. He thinks the system has a predetermined outcome no matter what he does when he gets involved, and criminal justice information systems or regional justice information systems, whatever you wish to call them, would tend to increase this conception and degenerate the concept of a supposedly independent judiciary. I would suggest you take this point into consideration.

Priority III. Immediate and expanded attention should be given to issues of security, privacy, and individual rights as they relate to criminal justice information systems. I have heard the comment several times this morning that the issues of secur-

ity and privacy have been discussed enough. At the risk of being controversial, I will take the position that they have not. This is not to slight, in any way, previous efforts in this area. I think that previous efforts have been outstanding and moving in the right direction. In the absence of legislative guidelines, I recommend that our courts take the initiative in developing guidelines for criminal justice information systems within their respective states. These guidelines should consider, not only which agencies can collect various types of information about a person, but to whom this information can be distributed and in what form. Given that the information is to be kept anyway, what are acceptable manipulations of that data and what caveats should be distributed with that data whenever it is distributed. I'll leave that issue for further discussion later.

Priority IV. An intensive training program in probabilistic models for members of the judiciary, the bar and some of us, should be initiated. What are probabilistic models? What do they do? How do they do it? What does the result really mean? There is a potentially serious problem in the lack of understanding when we tell a judge that this individual has a .5 probability of not being able to respond to a particular method of rehabilitation. I think that the judge and everyone who is participating in the discussion of an issue should be aware of what the model predicted and what the prediction is based upon. I suggest that the Congress be encouraged to assign the task of conducting a complete assessment of information technology, as applied to the criminal justice area, to its Office of Technical Assessment, when and if it is created. I suggest that in creating any criminal justice information system we begin to look at the whole area from the perspective of how each other agency and the public are affected.

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