

REMARKS  
AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

OF

JON ADLER  
DIRECTOR  
BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE  
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

AT THE

NATIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY PARTNERSHIP SUMMIT

ON

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2019  
MEMPHIS, TN

Thank you. It's a privilege to be here in the great city of Memphis. I bring greetings from all my colleagues at the Office of Justice Programs, including Katie Sullivan, the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General in charge of OJP. She asked that I convey her appreciation to all of you for your participation in this summit, and for the outstanding work you do every day.

I want to thank Mayor Strickland, U.S. Attorney Dunavant, Director Rallings, Sheriff Bonner and District Attorney Weirich for welcoming us to their city and for all they do to keep the people of Memphis and Shelby County safe. By the way, for those who may not know, Director Rallings was recently named Police Chief of the Year for Tennessee by the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police. Congratulations, Director Rallings.

I would also like to thank my colleague Laura Rogers for being here today and for the terrific job she does leading the Office on Violence Against Women.

I wish to acknowledge our partners, starting with our federal allies:

- The Federal Bureau of Investigation, represented by Deputy Director David Bowdich;
- The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives—Acting Deputy Director Regina Lombardo is with us today;
- The Drug Enforcement Administration, represented by its Acting Chief of Operations, Christopher Evans; and
- The U.S. Marshals Service, which is represented here today by its Associate Director for Operations, Nelson Hackmaster.

Let me also welcome our U.S. Attorneys. We are tremendously grateful for your leadership in your districts, and for joining us here today. My thanks as well to the mayors, sheriffs, police chiefs, district attorneys and everyone who does the hard work of protecting our communities. The National Public Safety Partnership, and the successes we're seeing because of it, would not be possible without your dedication and leadership. Thank you all.

And finally, I want to take this opportunity to thank the incomparable PSP team—starting with my Deputy Director, Kristen Mahoney, and our two PSP co-leaders, Kristie Brackens from my office and Teddy Miller from the FBI. Kristen, Kristie and Teddy have been with this effort from the start, and no part of it would be possible without them. Thanks to all three of you. And, of course, a huge debt of gratitude to all the strategic site liaisons who have given so much to this program. We are grateful for the guidance and expertise that you bring to PSP.

We are now in the third year of this Administration's fight against violent crime in America, and we've hit our stride. After two years of alarming increases in the crime rate leading up to President Trump's inauguration, we've seen two years of significant drops. Violent crime is, once again, trending down. This is a testament, not to some grand

federal policy or initiative, but to the hard work and sharp focus of our nation's front-line law enforcement officers. Your commitment to the rule of law and to the safety of your communities has made the difference in towns and cities across the country.

I myself have been privileged to work with dedicated professionals like all of you throughout my 26 years in law enforcement. I have watched brave men and women go willingly into high crime neighborhoods to confront violent criminals, knowing there was no guarantee that they would return safely, or at all. As a first responder on 9/11, I watched dozens of heroes enter the World Trade Center, guided only by a sense of mission, of honor and of an unrelenting desire to save lives. Seventy-two law enforcement officers never emerged, while others have made the ultimate sacrifice due to the fatal exposure to lethal toxins at the impacted sites.

You have all seen it, too—colleagues and friends confronting the worst in our society and showing us the best. Our nation is truly fortunate that you, and some 800,000 officers like you across the country, show up to work every day armed with your honor and dedication to protect the citizenry of our great nation.

We're lucky to have an Attorney General who understands and appreciates the sacrifices you make, day in and day out. As he told our friends at the Fraternal Order of Police last month, "In the final analysis, what stands between chaos and carnage on the one hand, and the civilized and tranquil society we all yearn for, is the thin blue line of law enforcement."

Attorney General Barr gets it. And our President gets it, too. From his first weeks in office, when he signed executive orders to improve public and officer safety, President Trump has been a true champion of law enforcement. He directed my office and his entire Administration to put the full weight of our resources behind the noble work you are doing in your jurisdictions. And that is precisely what we are doing.

We launched the Public Safety Partnership in 2017, when violent crime was on the rise across the nation. The President gave us a clear directive: To go into communities where violence had taken root and work with local law enforcement to restore order. We looked at the crime data, we visited areas where violent criminals had been most successful in staking a claim and we interviewed community leaders to assess the scope of the problem they faced. After an extensive search, we chose the sites that we felt had not only the biggest challenges, but the fiercest resolve to meet those challenges. These were cities with violent crime rates well above the national average, even at a time when rates of violence across the U.S. were elevated. Yet they were communities whose stakeholders demonstrated a clear and unified commitment to finding solutions.

We appear to have chosen well, because the sites we've engaged with have done some remarkable things and delivered some amazing results. Take Milwaukee, where homicides had reached a peak in 2015. The Milwaukee police, working with other local and federal partners, embarked on creating one of the most robust crime analysis divisions in the country. They looked closely at where most of the violent crimes were

being committed and who was committing them. Not surprisingly, they found that a small segment of the population was responsible for the vast majority of violent crime. Even today, half of all non-fatal shootings occur in just a dozen of the city's almost 200 neighborhoods. The PSP partners agreed to focus their efforts on reducing gun violence by committing to immediate investigations and preventing retaliatory acts. Through this combination of analysis and focused investigation, the city has seen a decline in homicides for three straight years.

New Orleans is another city that has benefitted from the PSP approach. Violent crime in the Big Easy jumped 14 percent from 2015 to 2016, and it had risen 30 percent over the previous five years. The New Orleans police began focusing on a two-square mile area known as Central City Square. They identified the most prolific offenders, many of whom they prosecuted in federal court. Working with the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Orleans Parish DA's Office, they expanded their approach to a second focus area. In both cases, they met with considerable success, and the results are now being seen city-wide. Between 2016 and 2018, homicides dropped by 16 percent, shootings decreased by 25 percent and armed robberies declined by 28 percent. New Orleans ended 2018 with its lowest murder toll since the early 70s. And the trend continues in 2019. Homicides for the year have dropped another 31 percent, compared to the same period last year, and armed robberies have decreased by 29 percent.

New Orleans and Milwaukee are just two incredible success stories from a whole book of victories. We're seeing progress in other sites as well, from Birmingham to St. Louis to Compton, and points in between. We added 10 new sites this summer, expanding the PSP presence from Anniston, Alabama, to Anchorage, Alaska. All told, 41 sites have participated in the National Public Safety Partnership, and the lessons we are learning from each one have been invaluable.

Of course, behind each of these successes is an outstanding group of federal partners who provide staunch support and unmatched expertise to local agencies:

- Beginning with the ATF, which has been vital to PSP's success in tracking down violent criminals, especially those involved in gun crimes and gang violence. Ballistics technicians supported by the ATF here in Memphis have evaluated more than 2,800 firearms and produced nearly 400 leads. And ATF helped clear a backlog of more than 1,300 guns in Flint, Michigan, over a one-year period.
- The FBI is another one of our great partners. They provide critical support by embedding agents in local departments, helping with crime mapping and analysis, and working closely with local officers to investigate serious crimes. The FBI helped the Milwaukee police reduce the number of unsolved non-fatal shootings to just a handful, while helping the Chicago police clear unsolved homicides dating back four decades.
- The DEA is part of this core group, as well. DEA agents seized 23 pounds of meth and 16 firearms while arresting 23 people in a federal drug trafficking case in Indianapolis. And in Compton, California, they logged more than 15,000 on

PSP cases over three years, seizing 370 pounds of meth, eight kilograms of fentanyl and three kilograms of heroin, along with 120 firearms.

- And finally, there's the U.S. Marshals Service, which provides substantial aid through fugitive task forces, warrant analysis and other specialized assistance. Marshals made 154 arrests last year while seizing 21 firearms in St. Louis in May 2018. And last month, they made 355 arrests and seized almost 70 firearms as part of Operation Triple Beam in Kansas City.

Every day, the amazing men and women of these four agencies live up to their reputations as America's elite crime-fighters. Knowing they're on the job should strike fear in even the most hardened criminals, and it should give comfort to the law-abiding citizens of this country.

Thanks to the work of federal agents and local law enforcement officers, and of our U.S. Attorneys and local prosecutors, PSP has played a pivotal role in driving down violent crime in America. We're looking to build on this momentum by delivering more resources to the field—which is why it gives me great pleasure to announce here today that my office will be awarding \$28 million in grants to support PSP and other crime reduction efforts.

Three of the grants will support training and technical assistance to support PSP sites, as well as cities participating in another of our key law enforcement programs—the Strategies for Policing Innovation program. SPI brings researchers and practitioners together to test promising approaches to crime prevention and crime reduction. We've funded more than 70 projects under this effort, and I'm very pleased that, through this most recent round of awards, we're adding Memphis to the list. We're excited to see the contributions that these new programs will yield.

In that vein, we're awarding 20 new grants to support prosecutors' offices as they engage in the important work of combating violence. Like SPI, these resources will help our D.A.s, commonwealth attorneys, and other local prosecutors develop evidence-based strategies aimed at getting violent criminals off the street.

And finally, I'm pleased that we'll be making eight new awards under our Local Crime Gun Intelligence Center Integration Initiative. Crime gun intelligence centers are managed by our partners at ATF in cooperation with local law enforcement, and they have been critical to curbing gun violence in a number of cities—in some cases, reducing the turnaround time for ballistics analysis from days and even weeks to just a matter of hours. Memphis was a recipient of one of these awards last year, and I'm glad that we'll be building on our base of support this year.

I'm very proud to make these resources available, on behalf of my office, on behalf of the Office of Justice Programs of which BJA is a part and on behalf of the entire U.S. Department of Justice. We entertain no illusions that these grants will solve the problem of violence in America, but I do firmly believe that, by giving our law enforcement partners access to critical information, cutting-edge technology and the

expertise of your counterparts across the country, we can help clear the path to sustainable solutions.

The work that each of you is doing under the Public Safety Partnership is a guidepost for communities throughout America. Your example of collaboration and innovation have helped to set a standard that we hope others will aspire to. You have shown what is possible when brave professionals committed to an important cause like public safety come together, face their challenges—no matter how daunting—and fight for the greater good. It has been an impressive thing to watch.

I am grateful for the outstanding work you're doing, in service of your communities and on behalf of the safety of every American. We are in your debt, and we are on your side. Thank you, and best wishes for a successful summit.

###