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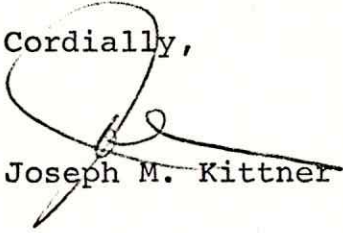
Major J. Rhett McMillian
Executive Secretary, APCO
P. O. Box 669
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Dear Rhett:

The enclosed article concerning LEAA and its problems appeared in the September 21, 1975 edition of the Washington Post. I thought you and Don would be interested.

Best regards.

Cordially,


Joseph M. Kittner

Enclosure

cc/enc: Officers

Strife Within Crime Agency

By John M. Goshko
Washington Post Staff Writer

At a time when President Ford has assigned it a leading role in the fight against crime, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration has become mired in inter-agency warfare that seems to have its top officials battling one another rather than the soaring crime rate.

In the view of sources familiar with LEAA, this bureaucratic civil war has so paralyzed the agency that the Ford administration may find itself forced to ease out a number of high-ranking LEAA officials, including Administrator Richard W. Velde.

That such drastic action may be under consideration is officially denied at the Justice Department, LEAA's parent organization, and elsewhere in the government. Velde said, "I have no interest in leaving either in the immediate or foreseeable future, and I don't think there is any interest in having me leave involuntarily."

Deputy Attorney General Harold R. Tyler Jr., who has been forced by the strife to intervene repeatedly in LEAA affairs during recent weeks, added, "We don't plan on any upheavals. If the question is are we going to fire everybody, I have to say that I don't contemplate that."

Still, within the criminal justice community—the far-reaching network of police, prosecutors, lawyers, judges and corrections officials that deals regularly with LEAA—there appears to be a strongly rooted conviction that the agency is on the brink of some wholesale changes at the top.

Much of the turmoil is due to personality clashes and factionalism. At its core, it involves deep-seated policy differences about how LEAA can best accomplish its task of assisting state and local law enforcement agencies with research and federal grants to try out experimental ideas to fight

crime, which went up 17 per cent last year.

In its most obvious form, it concerns a dispute about whether LEAA should give priority to hardware programs, such as the development of new police equipment, or to broader, if more theoretical, problems such as the causes of criminal behavior.

This controversy recently was exposed to public scrutiny in an almost farcical way when Velde ran into a barrage of ridicule over his espousal of such research projects as a police shoe that would house a firing device and a "wrist-watch" that would monitor a police officer's pulse and other vital signs and supposedly tell him if he was coming under undue stress.

Some of the criticism of "James Bond gadgetry" may have been exaggerated out of proportion to the importance that such projects occupy in LEAA's scheme of things. Still, in its way, the episode underscored the nature of the arguments about LEAA's priorities.

These arguments are more than academic at a time when the crime rate is climbing faster than at any point in modern American history, when Attorney General Edward H. Levi has characterized past assaults on the crime problem as a "failure," and when President Ford has addressed a special crime message to Congress pledging a renewed attempt to end "the kind of brutal violence that makes us fearful of strangers and afraid to go out at night."

In his message, the President singled out LEAA as the agency that will spearhead Washington's contribution to the new campaign. And the administration has asked Congress to extend LEAA's statutory life for another five years and to boost its annual spending authorization, already the biggest item in the Justice Department budget, from \$1.25 billion to \$1.3 billion.

With congressional hear-

ings on these requests due to start this fall, the agency's effectiveness is certain to come in for some hard scrutiny. Lately, there has been mounting criticism of its performance, even from police chiefs and other law enforcement officials whom LEAA regards as its constituency.

Chief Wes Pomeroy of Berkeley, Calif., said of the LEAA: "I'm very disappointed in it. There is so much bureaucracy and red tape at every level that it's almost impossible to make the system accessible to real needs. I think that if you looked hard at the figures, you'd find that a lot of the money is being eaten up by administration and that damn little is getting put out where the rubber meets the road."

Chief James Parsons of Birmingham, Ala., said, "I feel personally that LEAA has been a tremendous failure. It's tried to pump massive amounts of money into the criminal justice system without having any adequate benchmarks against which to assess programs and their effectiveness. The people running LEAA have never had any clear focus about what they should be doing—no idea of how the criminal justice system must function as a whole."

Joseph McNamara, police chief in Kansas City, said, "The program should have been much more concrete and better defined from the beginning, with clearly stated, realistic goals."

And Chief Hugo Massini of Hartford, Conn. said, "I don't want to pass a blanket judgment on LEAA, because it has funded some very healthy projects. Too often though, I think LEAA is overly responsive to the constant demand for equipment from chiefs in smaller cities with limited budgets."

Although these complaints differ somewhat in their specifics, they can all be traced to two problems that have plagued LEAA from the beginning—a lack of control over the money that



RICHARD W. VELDE

... LEAA administrator

it hands out and a lack of consistent policy direction from higher up.

When Congress created LEAA in 1968, it said the agency was primarily a state and local government responsibility and that federal involvement should be limited to technical assistance.

As a result, LEAA was set up as a revenue-sharing agency that would parcel federal money out to the states, which would then distribute it for projects at the local level.

All these factors deprived LEAA of what Kansas City Mayor Joseph P. McNamara calls "a clear-cut game plan." Without it, he contended, "you get a vacuum that starts attracting pressure groups like police chiefs looking for handouts to stretch their budgets."

If it can be described accurately in personal terms, the current strife involves a struggle between Velde and a man who's no longer there—his predecessor, the administrator's office Donald E. Santarelli.

Santarelli's turn in the revolving procession of LEAA administrators began in 1971.

"As a crime reduction agency, LEAA had failed," said Santarelli, who is now in private law practice.

May Force Shakeup by Ford



HAROLD R. TYLER JR.
t, deputy Attorney General

thought it best to face that fact squarely and to think of it in terms of a criminal justice improvement agency.

"The one thing it could provide of an importance even greater than money was strong and aggressive leadership to get people thinking about crime and its solutions. So, instead of sitting back passively and just handing out money, I tried to use the office as a pulpit on the theory that the only way you can make people pay serious attention to a big clumsy whale is to paint it so that it looks like a shark," he said.

He quickly earned a widespread reputation for what one LEAA staffer described as "shaking things up by bringing in a lot of bright young people who were doing interesting things."

Among them were Gerald M. Caplan, who left a law school post to head the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, LEAA's \$40-million-a-year research arm; and he and Santarelli began trying to reverse the burgeoning emphasis on hardware development.

Instead, they put their stress on what Santarelli called "the average citizens

who are the real and potential victims of crime."

Then, in mid-1974, Santarelli was forced out of LEAA after being quoted in the press as favoring the resignation of then-President Nixon. To succeed him, Nixon turned, in the dying moments of his presidency, to Velde, who had been a high-level LEAA staffer since 1969.

Velde, now 43, is the son of a former FBI agent who served briefly as chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee during the early 1950s. Before going to LEAA, he was minority counsel for the Senate Judiciary Committee and was widely regarded as the protege of Nebraska's Sen. Roman Hruska, the ranking Republican on the committee.

Many LEAA sources think that the Ford administration's tiptoeing around the question of Velde's resignation is prompted by a desire not to offend Hruska.

In any event, Velde is known to have clashed repeatedly with agency officials who were close to Santarelli, such as Caplan and Deputy Administrator Charles R. Work. The extent of the friction became clear a few weeks ago, when proposed disciplinary action was pressed against six LEAA officials for allegedly skirting civil service regulations in hiring new personnel during Santarelli's tenure.

Less clear is the precise nature of the dispute. Some outside observers, noting Velde's conservative background, have jumped to the conclusion that he is a hard-line right winger trying to impose rigid law-and-order attitudes on LEAA.

Actually though, there is nothing in the record of Velde's first year to justify this change. He points out that "we do business with approximately 40,000 criminal justice agencies that

cover the whole spectrum of political views, and it's incumbent on us to be even-handed and respectful."

His opponents concede that he has been scrupulous about observing this dictum. If anything, some point out, he has leaned over backward to avoid the "hard-liner" tag by encouraging an increase in projects designated to help minorities and ghetto communities.

Nor is the charge that Velde champions a return to all-out hardware research as clear-cut as it seems on the surface. He does have a fascination with gadgets.

But Velde is quick to assert that he has a lot of other interests as well.

"The talk about our doing nothing but hardware projects has always been exaggerated," he said. "LEAA has had about 85,000 projects during its total life. If you look at the research portfolio during that time, only about a quarter is devoted to hardware, with three-fourths going to behavioral sciences, systems analysis and things like that."

Perhaps the real reason for Velde's conflict with the Santarelli faction is its feeling that Velde has shunned the leadership role his predecessor tried to carve out for the agency and allowed LEAA to slide back into its old groove of drifting with the pressures from law enforcement special interests.

This is the opinion of one former staffer who regards Velde as "in most respects, a very competent law enforcement professional." But this source continues, "he's a creature of the Congress, and to him phrases like 'the intent of Congress' are close to Holy Writ.

"In Velde's view, Congress intended LEAA to have a limited role that wouldn't threaten the states with federal domination of their police powers. Velde's

approach is to take every comma of that literally, act as a conduit for the money and adopt a basically laissez-faire attitude toward what the states do with it. The only way you'll change that is for Justice or the White House to dictate his moves to him from up above."

There are signs that this is what may happen. Since stepping into the dispute, deputy Attorney General Tyler already has blocked the disciplinary proceedings from turning into a purge by sweeping the charges under the rug with some mild reprimands. Now, he and Levi appear to be ending Justice's hands-off policy toward LEAA and trying to bring it under closer control.

Tyler says that the new LEAA legislation proposed to Congress is intended to "make clearer to the law enforcement community that the Justice Department is the agency that contains LEAA and that the Attorney General will have a good deal to say about its functioning in the future." This is to be done through such devices as appointing an advisory panel of nongovernment experts to help oversee LEAA's activities, and giving the Attorney General the power to appoint the agency's research chief directly.

Among many law enforcement sources, however, the feeling persists that these are essentially cosmetic changes that will have little impact on improving LEAA's effectiveness.

Their view is that if the administration is serious about making LEAA a credible weapon in the war against crime, it will, in the words of Chief McNamara in Kansas City, "have to bite the bullet, sit down and do some hard thinking about what questions it wants LEAA to answer and how."

the fashion is french