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Crime Efforts An Indictment

THE proliferation of community crime prevention groups is a serious indictment of public officials for their failure to protect citizens' lives and property. It could hardly be stronger.

Crime watch clubs, vigilante societies and mutual assistance associations are being formed in Oklahoma City, Mustang, east side, west side and out in rural areas because people do not believe they are adequately protected by local, county, state or federal authorities, or by all of them combined.

People are saying, in effect: "We hired you public officials to enforce the laws and take criminals out of circulation, but you're not getting the job done. We are having to pay your salaries and then do the job ourselves."

That isn't the way it ought to be, but it is. It will continue in that direction until civilized society turns things around by winning some big battles against crime, and many small ones.

A nationwide Gallup Poll last summer showed that a record high 45 per cent of Americans are afraid to walk in their own neighborhoods at night. About one-fifth said they do not feel safe within the confines of their own homes.

Yet, nearly every monthly or annual crime report shows that the criminal element is getting bigger and stronger. Oklahoma City chalked up 62 homicides last year.

Not all criminals are captured, but there is little reason for those who are caught to fear that they will be confined long enough to cause serious interruption of their crime careers. For some, it may be a paid vacation at state expense.

Rehabilitation is more political conversation and emotional hogwash than it is fact. It is too much to expect that individuals who have embarked upon lives of crime and who have little concept of right and wrong or the rights of others would be converted into useful citizens by a few months in prison.

Yet, our system is to turn out criminals we've caught and convicted in order to make room for others, many of whom are previous offenders returning. We may need a considerably larger prison system to do it, but we should gear prison capacity to the number of lawbreakers; not to arbitrary population figures.

By stopping the revolving prison exit gate, we could stem reinforcement of the army of criminals with experts from behind the walls. One term would be enough for many of the outlaws if it were long enough to be inconvenient and convincing.

Then, too, when we become serious about confining burglars, thieves, robbers and killers for long periods of time, many of those who may be tempted to commit crimes may decide it is more desirable to go to work. They might prefer freedom to a fast buck, if the latter carried a meaningful penalty in prison.

No citizen is truly safe if he lives in fear of his life, if his family, home and property are not safe, and if he is afraid to venture onto streets in his own neighborhood. Our present laws, law enforcement officials, courts and corrections agencies are not adequately protecting our freedom, and that is why citizens are resorting to "do it yourself" crime protection.



Aloha from Hawaii**

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Howdy

Now & then someone sends me a clip of your writings. Just got one from Chuck Huddleston - (7430 E 48 - #10 Torrey) The caption was Crime Efforts An Indictment.

I particularly agree with your paragraph "We hired & pay you guys . . . but we have to do the job ourselves". And I commend U for it - give 'em the - !

There has no doubt been a general deterioration in the grumption (civic duty, involvement, patriotism) in the USx. I even noticed this weakness ~~de~~ growing in the period I was in the service. This attitude of "let George do it", "what's in it for me" "I don't want to get involved" must do a 180 or else.

The masons had the idea there in Ada once, right?

All is well with us. Best personal regards

William

