

Washington

White-collar crimes targeted

Attorney general sets priorities

WASHINGTON — Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti issued detailed priorities Wednesday for a federal fight against white-collar crime, but dodged questions on whether he will step up FBI undercover activities such as the Abscam probe.

"We intend to zero in on the kinds of white-collar crime that most affect the people of this country," Civiletti said.

These crimes threaten the pocketbooks of the nation's citizens — as consumers, taxpayers, business persons and investors.

Based on an eight-month Justice Department study, Civiletti announced seven priorities in the fight against white-collar crime for all U.S. attorney's offices, all inspectors general of federal agencies and the FBI.

The priorities include emphasis on combating:

- Corruption among public officials at all levels of government.
- Crimes against the government by private citizens, including tax fraud, procurement fraud, program fraud and counterfeiting.
- Fraud against business, such as embezzlement, bank fraud, insurance fraud, bankruptcy fraud and labor racketeering.
- Crimes against consumers, including defrauding of customers, antitrust violations and energy pricing violations.
- Crimes against investors, in-

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cluding stock and real estate swindles.

Crimes against employees, including life-endangering health and safety violations and corruption by union leaders.

Hazardous waste dumping and other practices threatening the public health.

With FBI Director William Webster and Inspector General Kurt Muellenberg of the General Services Administration sitting by at a briefing, Civiletti said adoption of the priorities is unprecedented.

"It's the first time that we've been able together, working with 20 departments and agencies, to come to a consensus and to recognize the importance of updating information, and to have a baseline from which to measure performance and non-performance," he said.

Reporters asked Civiletti whether the new approach to white-collar crime would include more FBI undercover operations, such as the Abscam probe in which agents posed as bribe-paying Arabs and their associates.

Civiletti declined to say whether

those investigations will increase in number, but defended the tactic as "essential to effective federal law enforcement as well as state law enforcement."

He said department officials have learned from the Abscam investigation.

"One of the things we've learned is that videotapes are terribly important and quite convincing," Civiletti

said. "We should have known that long ago, that a picture is worth a thousand words."

Asked whether the FBI was careful to avoid entrapping congressmen into committing crimes they otherwise would not have committed, Civiletti said the conviction of Rep. Michael "Ozzie" Myers, D-Pa., and five other pending cases will show the probes were carefully monitored.

He said prosecutors and FBI agents had to make certain the congressmen "realized they were being asked to participate in an illegal activity, so that it wasn't a sense that they stumbled into something, or that they thought they were going to a ball game and they were really going to a payoff meeting."

Russians still buying U.S. grains

WASHINGTON — The Soviet Union is steadily buying as much American grain as permitted under President Carter's partial grain embargo to the Soviet Union.

Tuesday, for the second day in a row, the Department of Agriculture Department announced a sale of 300,000 tons of U.S. corn by private exporters for undisclosed sums.

On Monday, the department announced a sale of 200,000 tons of corn and 100,000 tons of wheat.

Over the past several weeks, the Kremlin has purchased 3.16 million tons of U.S. grain, for the year beginning Oct. 1, the fifth and final year of the agreement.

Carter will permit sale of 8 million tons for the upcoming 12-month

Swine fever measure urged

WASHINGTON — Congress is being urged to approve a preventative measure to help keep fatal, contagious African swine fever from infecting hogs in the United States and raising pork prices.

Rep. Paul Findley, R-Ill., sponsor of the bill, which was approved by the House Agriculture subcommittee, said Tuesday Congress must act on it before the end of the current session. The bill would require 35 states that do not ban feeding of garbage to swine to enforce strict rules for cooking garbage to kill disease organisms.

All 35 states have some rules, but enforcement varies from state to state.

"The threat is a clear and present one," Findley said.

The disease has spread in the

Western Hemisphere, appearing in Brazil, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

There is no vaccine and no treatment so it could cause widespread hog deaths and higher consumer prices if it spread to the United States.

To satisfy concerns of New Jersey and Texas, the subcommittee Tuesday agreed to reduce the federal role in the bill. Instead of regulating garbage feeding in the states, the federal government would move in only if states failed to enforce their laws.

The bill must be approved by the House Agriculture Committee, the full House and the Senate before Congress adjourns this fall.

The subcommittee also approved a bill authorizing a five-year \$50 million funding program to modernize

agricultural research facilities at 17 historically black colleges and universities.

The 17 schools are Prairie View A&M University, Alabama A&M University, Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Delaware State College, Florida A&M University, Fort Valley State College in Georgia, Kentucky State University, Southern University in Louisiana and University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

Also, Alcorn State University in Mississippi, Lincoln University in Missouri, North Carolina A&T State University, Langston State University in Oklahoma, South Carolina State College, Tennessee State University and Virginia State University will receive funding.

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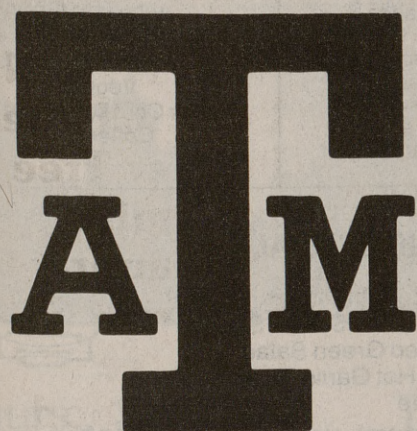
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