# INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
# "COMBATING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY ON THE INTERNET"
# REMARKS OF U.S. DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC HOLDER
**Vienna, Austria**
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It is both a pleasure and an honor for me to be here today. Child pornography on the Internet must be an issue of international concern, it must be at the forefront of the global agenda. Children are our most precious and fragile resource, they are our future. This is true regardless of what nation they come from. Their protection must be an international priority.

I would like to thank Foreign Minister Schüssel for his personal initiative in proposing this conference, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff led by Ambassador Cede for its strong efforts to turn the concept of this conference into a reality, and the staff of the European Commission for its counsel and support. I would also like to recognize the efforts of Tom Burrows, from the US Department of Justice, for his outstanding efforts on the conference.

As we gather here in this beautiful city for the next three days, there is no doubt that much will be learned and that much will be accomplished. And there are many parents and children throughout the world who will benefit from our efforts and who will be thankful for them.

We are gathered here because there is a serious problem that we must confront-- the Internet is being used by child pornographers and molesters to further their criminal activity. It is that simple and it is that serious.

As we approach this problem let me make clear that we all must appreciate what a great tool the Internet has become. It has made the world truly smaller, allowing us to communicate better and it has stimulated and facilitated commerce. These are important benefits for the world community.

At the same time, however, these tools have been used by some people to exploit our children. We have to ensure that technology generally and the Internet specifically are not themselves unjustifiably blamed for the evils caused by certain criminals. We must not put at risk the real progress we have made, and will make, through appropriate use of the technology. In fact, we should use this new technology as part of the solution to this important problem.

Law enforcement, police and prosecutors around the world have the ability to communicate with each other much more efficiently, utilizing the Internet, than ever before. The more quickly we can communicate, the more evidence that we can access and preserve, the more likely we are to identify and prosecute child abusers successfully.

Technology can also help in the development of filtering and blocking programs, so parents and teachers can choose what types of materials they want to prevent from reaching their children. These filters and blockers may not work perfectly, but they empower individuals and parents, rather than governments, to regulate content coming into their homes.
There is still, however, a vital role for government to play in the regulation of illegal content. The United States Department of Justice has made great strides in protecting children from criminal hazards on the Internet. Through undercover operations conducted by our federal agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Customs Service, the United States Postal Inspection Service, we have taken, and will continue to take, an aggressive approach in this area.

United States federal prosecutions of Internet child pornographers have increased 10% every year since 1995; we now prosecute approximately 400 such cases per year ... just in our federal courts. We have also provided training and worked with law enforcement officers throughout our country and internationally. Our own Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) has sent attorneys around the United States to train law enforcement officers and prosecutors on the prosecution of Internet related child exploitation cases. They have also worked with law enforcement and the judiciary from countries such as Russia, South Africa, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Latvia.

As the numbers of these cases we have prosecuted has grown we have come to realize that law enforcement officers around the world must work together. That is to say, the more we have prosecuted these cases, the more we have seen first hand that the Internet and the criminals who use it, respect no jurisdictional lines and recognize no physical boundaries.

For example, Operation Cathedral involved 21 countries and over 100 members of a pedophile ring. With strong leadership from Great Britain, we were able to prosecute 22 individuals in the United States alone. We also learned that cooperation from the ISP industry was essential in our efforts, for it was through the records they kept that we were able to identify the targets of our investigations.

Many of you will learn more of Operation Cathedral in one of the working groups.

The United States Department of Justice, as well as the Interior and Justice Ministries of other countries have taken a proactive role in reaching out to the ISP industry through meetings, working groups, and conferences. We, as law enforcement officers, have recognized that we must be familiar with the technological tools utilized by these criminals. And so, from industry we have sought training in such areas as Internet Relay Chat, the World Wide Web, and newsgroups.

In return, we have provided presentations that familiarize the industry with our objectives, the steps we must take to succeed, and the requirements of our privacy laws.

And finally, hotlines have received strong support from some governments. The U.S. Congress last year provided funding to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children that led to the "cyber tipline" which allows citizens to report children in danger and child pornography on the Internet. Since its inception in March, 1998, the tipline has received over 8000 tips reporting child pornography alone. Many of you will hear from the Center's Ruben Rodriguez later on today.

As I said previously, the Internet and those who would use it illegally, do not limit themselves by jurisdictions or traditional boundaries. With that in mind, the Department of Justice has become an active participant in the international law enforcement community through the International Association of Prosecutors (IAP).

Just three weeks ago, in Beijing the IAP adopted recommendations for combating child pornography on the Internet. Its recommendations included banning child pornography in every country, and other legislative changes that will enable law enforcement agents and prosecutors to combat child pornography. Other recommendations were for voluntary measures to be undertaken by the ISP industry and for industry-government cooperation. These recommendations are an excellent starting point for the work of this conference, and you will be hearing about them tomorrow from Mr. Eamonn Barnes.

We are also working in the Council of Europe and the G-8 to develop policies that enable us to fight child pornography and other cybercrime. These discussions focus on difficult issues such as cross-border searches and encryption.

And so today, we have in this place international law enforcement leaders from many countries, the leading Internet service providers and associations, and the committed, effective hotline operators.

But the fact that we have gathered here today is simply not enough. Once we leave we must recognize the need to work with each other, to challenge each other, to do better in each of our areas of expertise. We must not sit idly by as child pornographers use the Internet to abuse children; we must instead be active in the fight to protect all of our children, wherever they are, from this criminal element.

I would like to leave you with four challenges that I believe we must face if we are to be truly successful:

First, we must take steps to ensure that we can obtain the evidence necessary to identify child pornographers. That means certain data must be retained by ISPs for reasonable periods of time so that it can be accessible to law enforcement,

Second, we must respect the right to privacy and laws protecting it and we should use proper legal process to obtain data - but we must also make sure that those laws are not so strict that effective enforcement is not possible. In some cases, changes to privacy laws may be required to recognize the new technological reality we now confront,

Third, we must work together - hotlines, law enforcement and private industry and we need to shield from civil liability those hotlines, ISPs and others in industry that, in good faith, attempt to assist law enforcement in investigations of child pornography. Cooperation with law enforcement should never be the basis for legal action against those in industry who act responsibly and are simply trying to do that which is right.

Finally, we must work together to educate our citizens and consumers about tools and other resources that are readily available to them- such as filtering and blocking software - that have the capacity to protect children and other users from harmful content.

I, and others in my country, look forward to hearing the results of all the hard work you will all do over the next few days. Our efforts this week can make a significant, positive difference in the lives of many young people. We must never lose sight of this. The technological world in which we live must be, ultimately, a world where concern for our fellow citizens is transcendent. And the people about whom we must care the most are our children. The technology that we have created must be used in such a way that children's lives are made better, not damaged. The Internet has the capacity to do great good or great harm- we must recognize this and use the technology for those things positive. I am confident that if those of us in law enforcement work with our partners in industry we can insure a better future for our children and for ourselves. Here in Vienna at the end of this technological, industrial century, then, let us begin the work that will insure the development of a new millennium in which, more than anything, the lives of our children are valued.

Thank you.