



Department of Justice

ADDRESS

OF

THE HONORABLE EDWIN MEESE III
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

BEFORE

THE SAN DIEGO KIWANIS CLUB

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER 24, 1985

Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen. And thank you Jim for that outstanding introduction. As a matter of fact I just whispered to Jim that that introduction was so outstanding I ought to quit while I'm ahead.

It is a great honor however to be with you here tonight and particularly to see so many friends. By the way, Jim had a couple of stories there and I know where he got those and you'll pay for this.

It is a real privilege to return to my own club here. I enjoyed very much the opportunity to have been an active member for several years and I'm now very proud to be an honorary member of the club.

This sixty-fifth anniversary of the San Diego Kiwanis Club is an important milestone for the organization and also for the City of San Diego. As you heard from Jack's excellent history there this club has rendered important service to the community throughout its entire history. Also it was noted that when several introductions were made tonight that over this 65-year period many of the civic leaders of San Diego have been members of this club. And of course it's had a very close association with the military units located in the vicinity of San Diego and many of the commanding officers here have been members of the club as well.

I felt a close affinity for Kiwanis for almost my entire life. My father was a very active Kiwanian and held virtually every office including President of the Oakland Kiwanis Club.

When I was in high school I was privileged to be a member of the Key Club. So I was greatly honored when Frank Nichol in 1977 invited me to look into this club and was very proud when I was accepted into membership here.

I enjoyed the fellowship and the programs and the service opportunities. As was mentioned earlier this evening, I really enjoyed particularly serving with Ed Miller (Admiral Ed Miller) on the Major Emphasis Committee, and it was interesting that the work we did had a great deal to do with both crime prevention and juvenile delinquency prevention, matters that take up a good deal of my time today.

And I remember back to when Jack was mentioning earlier that first Holiday Bowl luncheon where President Ford was the guest of honor and provided a speech to an overflow audience that helped in that event and in subsequent years let the rest of the country know that San Diego is America's finest city. So it's a great pleasure to have been invited to participate in this celebration tonight. I commend my colleagues and the club for 65 years of service and to look ahead, as I know we all are, to many more years of successful activity for the San Diego Kiwanis club under the continuing guidance of Junior Todd.

This is an important week for San Diego as many of you know. At the end of this week the California State Bar is having its convention here. And representatives of California's 90,000 lawyers will be traipsing into town. I'm not sure how many of them will be here but it is interesting to note, I heard the history here tonight, to realize California has almost as many

lawyers today as the entire population of San Diego in 1920 when the club was formed. Now you may have varying views, whether that's good news or bad news.

As you've heard from the previous speakers, this Kiwanis Club and Kiwanians throughout the country have always been very much concerned about helping young people to develop into productive citizens, and also they've been interested and worked over the years to keep our communities safe from crime.

Tonight I would like to discuss a subject that touches on both of these objectives and which also is a top priority among our national criminal justice goals, as you heard Jack mention in his introduction.

So tonight I'd like to talk a little bit about the prevention and control of drug abuse. This is a matter of great personal concern to our national leaders. President Reagan for example has personally directed that all agencies of the federal government cooperate in an unprecedented campaign against drug traffickers. Our First Lady Nancy Reagan has devoted her personal attention to a nationwide series of programs for prevention and education against drug abuse particularly among young people.

And Vice President George Bush has given his personal leadership to a national interdiction effort which works to prevent narcotics from entering our shores. It is my responsibility to serve as Chairman of the new National Drug Enforcement Policy Board, which for the first time coordinates

with the Cabinet level all of the resources that are directed towards the battle against illegal drugs.

At the outset let me mention two major principles that govern our nation's fight against narcotics.

First of all, we believe in a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, we have enforcement activity against the traffickers of drugs trying to reduce and we would hope some day eliminate the supply of drugs entering our country and being sold within our country.

On the other hand, the second very important program which is equally vigorously pursued is to work on the demand side -- to reduce the demand, to prevention and education activities. I'll talk a little more about both of these later.

An important second principle is that narcotic law enforcement involves cooperative effort between the federal government on the one hand, and state and local law enforcement agencies on the other. In the Department of Justice and other federal law enforcement agencies, we respect the fact that the primary responsibility for the prevention and control of crime belongs to local government and to local police departments and sheriffs offices.

At the same time there is a federal role which complements, supports and assists the local law enforcement in several ways.

First of all federal agencies, including the Justice Department, deal with interstate and international crime which might otherwise be beyond the jurisdictional or geographical limits of state and local law enforcement agencies. Our role

particularly in drug enforcement has expanded because drug trafficking rarely limits its activities to a particular jurisdiction -- or even a particular state -- and now even a particular nation. Indeed our personnel are engaged in a array of activities in support of the investigation and prosecution of major drug traffickers on an international basis because most of the time the sources of drugs are outside the borders of our country.

A second major federal role is to provide policy leadership as both the President and Justice Department have done in the case of drugs.

The third responsibility is to assist local law enforcement through training, technical assistance, and joint efforts.

Before I describe how our country's anti-drug operations are working, let me first tell you a little bit about the problem that we face.

Let's start with marijuana because here we have some good news for a change. In 1984, the overall use of marijuana in our country was down, primarily because of a clear trend of less marijuana use in the under-25-year-old age group -- people between 15 and 25 are using less marijuana, which is a major advance. We expect this downward trend to extend through 1985. We are happy to see that marijuana-related hospital emergencies have also declined, verifying the other information that has been obtained. Other hopeful signs on the marijuana front are spot shortages of marijuana from Colombia, which had been for a long time the principle source of marijuana in this country, as a

result of Colombia's own enforcement efforts and the eradication programs which they started in that country. There has also been a net decrease in domestically-produced marijuana within the United States largely due to our eradication campaigns, which I will talk about in a few moments.

Next, let's talk about heroin. We currently have a half million (500,000) heroin addicts in the United States. Heroin consumption did show a slight decline in 1984 and we hope to hold it at that level this year.

Well that's the good news. The bad news is that almost all other categories of narcotic use have hit all-time highs.

Cocaine use, for example, has increased dramatically, spreading to all levels of the social spectrum. Recently we have read about the rampant cocaine use among professional athletes, including some of the biggest names in baseball. What's happening now which is coming out of the trial in Pittsburgh illustrates a real tragedy in professional sports which many of us feel is as much of a scandal as some of baseball's scandals in the late 1900s and the period of time there when baseball almost went under. The commissioner of baseball, who I met with recently, shares that feeling, and realizes that there is much work to be done to clean up the game as far as the illegal drug use. The baseball players are not alone. They join professionals like doctors and lawyers, businessmen and businesswomen, actors and singers, other athletes and people from every other walk of life.

The number of young users of cocaine is also increasing. Projections show that by the end of this year, one out of every five high school students will have tried cocaine before graduating and ten percent of suburban high school students will be regular users.

All told there may be more than 24 million Americans who have some time or another during the course of the year used cocaine. When you consider the destructive nature of this particular drug, it becomes clear that a national disaster is literally in the making.

New evidence is supporting the findings that cocaine may be both more addictive and also more toxic than heroin. According to researchers in Montreal and some of the most latest studies laboratory animals given free access to cocaine died at almost three times the rate of those that were given access to heroin.

It is kind of ironic that at one time cocaine was touted by some as a so-called harmless, non-addictive, even called a "recreational" drug. However, the latest medical research has revealed that it produces a tenacious dependency that is accompanied by an erratic behavior and a sharp deterioration of health. I have friends in the legal profession for example that can tell you that when they see a bankruptcy occur they can tell that in many of these cases it's the use of cocaine. Other people in business are increasingly aware of bright careers -- all go up and up and all of a sudden hit a plateau and then the person plummets, often is fired and too often commit suicide. In many of these cases the whole source of this problem is cocaine.

Unfortunately the laboratory findings that I just talked about have been verified by interviews with actual cocaine users. I'll just read to you a few of the findings of these interviews.

- 71 percent of the people who have habitually used cocaine said that the drug was more important to them than food;
- 50 percent said it was more important than sex;
- 72 percent said it was more important than family activities; and
- 64 percent said it was more important than the friends that it had displaced in their lives.

Well these formal findings repeat what users have been saying informally for a long time. For example, one baseball star who testified in this case in Pittsburgh recently warned that cocaine use produces what he called "an insatiable desire for more."

Well, let's turn to the "dangerous drug" use, which is also unfortunately escalating.

--Methamphetamine, PCP, and a variety of "designer drugs"-- the synthetic drug analogues have also increased in 1984 and the trends indicate that we will see an increased use of these drugs also in 1985.

The illegal trafficking of prescription drugs, and the diversion of those drugs from legal to illicit channels (which accounts for 70 percent of all drug-related deaths), is also on the rise.

Now I didn't come here this evening to spoil a fine occasion with a lot of bad news. But I think you would agree with me that

if we do have a national disaster in the making we must face the facts about drug consumption so that we can then learn how we can do something about it before the disaster takes place.:

It is hardly consolation, but it is interesting to note that our country is not alone in having a drug problem. Our international neighbors, who once saw America's drug problem as peculiarly rooted in own so-called hedonism, are coming face-to-face with the drug spectre in their own countries. Not only are West European countries, along with Great Britain, increasingly awash in drugs, but many drug-producing countries like Peru and Colombia also are witnessing the start of heavy use by their own citizens.

Peru, particularly, has been brought around to attacking the cocaine trade, which has long been one of its principal industries. As one commentator has written, a nation's drug abuse can have serious secondary effects. "While drug action destabilizes all sorts of formal lines of authority, the money involved finances the chaos. The lure of easy money, particularly in a society where poverty is rampant and class lines are drawn, makes drugs a new and strong aspect of that society." The narco-guerilla warfare--that is, a guerilla insurgency funded by drug profits--that we are witnessing in Peru is spreading to Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua, and even to Africa. The sort of anarchy it produces opens up new opportunities for the Eastern Bloc and for Soviet expansion. We can no longer afford to ignore the geo-political aspects of drug trafficking. That is why narcotic enforcement has important foreign policy

implications in which the Departments of Justice and State are working together in dealing with the problems of some of these other countries.

Having given you a sense of the magnitude of the problem, let me talk a little about what's happening in the federal government to support state and local law enforcement in anti-drug activities.

The objective of our drug enforcement strategy is to reduce the availability of illegal drugs or to prevent drugs from being diverted from legitimate production. Our strategy has several components. They are pursued through law enforcement, regulation, and diplomatic efforts:

First of all, it is our purpose to destroy illegal drugs at the source. That is in the countries where the crops are being grown and where the narcotics are produced. This means taking the narcotic fight into other nations, as we are through our State Department and Drug Enforcement Administration efforts in the other nations. We have a considerable amount of federal funds being given to governments along with helicopters and other equipment so that we can destroy the narcotics at their source.

Second, we attempt to seize drug contraband enroute to or at the borders of this country. Many of the agencies here tonight are involved very deeply in this activity. Third, we identify, investigate, and prosecute the major drug trafficking organizations; this, clearly, is a federal role. Fourth, we use assorted controls to prevent the diversion of legitimately produced drugs into illegal markets. And finally, we are

starting to take the profit out of drugs by seizing and forfeiting the property that is used by the traffickers.

At the Department of Justice, and with the other departments that are involved in this effort, although we are a long way from getting the upper hand on the drug problem, I feel that we have made significant enforcement gains during the past four years.

For example, although we had a period of time where there was kind of running-in period, we have now made much better use of federal resources by giving the FBI concurrent jurisdiction over drug offenses so that their efforts, which have been traditionally involved with organized crime, can be combined with that of the Drug Enforcement Administration; together we can have joint task forces working on both organized crime and the drug trafficking which is too often an incident of that organized criminal activity. We've also enlisted the military forces in our interdiction activities. And we have added new resources. During this period we've added 1,000 new agents, 200 Assistant U.S. Attorneys, plus support staff, which together comprise our thirteen regional Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Forces. We've also developed partnerships with state and local law enforcement agencies to an unprecedented degree. Last year, for example, state and local police departments and sheriff's offices were involved in more than 40 percent of our drug task force cases. By bringing together the U.S. Attorneys, the FBI, the DEA, Customs officials and the criminal investigation division of the IRS, as well as the intelligence community, we have compiled an exceptionally successful effort. It's kind of

interesting; we had a conference yesterday in Virginia Beach where we brought together the coordinators of our task force and one of my colleagues said, "you know, we want you to know that the IRS criminal division is working on drugs too. If we have to deal with the IRS the criminals might as well have to get used to it also." Well, the statistics that have been compiled by these drug enforcement task forces are indeed impressive. In two-and-one-half years they have developed indictments against a total of over 6,300 major offenders. So far in the cases that have gone to trial, there have been something like 2,500 convictions with many of the other cases pending for an overall conviction rate in excess of 95 percent.

We've also been adding some new weapons to our anti-drug arsenal. With asset forfeiture -- taking the property either used in the commission of the crime or which has been purchased as a result of the proceeds of drug dealing -- our task forces have been making major seizures and then through court action forfeiting this property. We've obtained through 1984 some \$219 million from the drug traffickers through forfeitures, fines and seizures. Auctions of jewelry and luxury residences have brought high visibility and very good prices. As a matter of fact, as your trustee, I now own a horse ranch in Texas with 215 Apoolosa ponies because that was the proceeds of a drug trafficker which was seized and is now going through the forfeiture and auction procedures by the federal government. I'm happy to report that while we're going through the court procedures we're also making money on the ranch. In that same transaction interestingly

enough they seized a Rolls Royce Silver Cloud limousine. Now normally the cars that are seized are put into appropriate use by law enforcement agencies but my public relations people said that wouldn't be appropriate for the Attorney General. In any event the law enforcement agencies throughout the country, including the federal, state and local organizations are putting the confiscated cars, boats, and planes to very good enforcement use.

The Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984 now permits us to take this property that we've seized and, after auctioning it off, to share the proceeds with local law enforcement agencies. Such funds can only be used for law enforcement purposes; so that they would not be diverted into the general fund or the local treasury but can only be used for police purposes. If properly used these forfeited assets will be a big help to state and local police departments and sheriff's offices in their battle against cash rich drug traffickers.

Most of our activities at the Department of Justice are aimed at the supply of drugs. We must wage war on the supply from both foreign and domestic sources.

Let's look first at the interdiction of drugs originating abroad. At the present time, the DEA estimates that in 1984, nearly 4.2-4.5 metric tons of heroin crossed our borders, along with over 100 metric tons of cocaine, and excess of 11,000 metric tons of marijuana. These drugs come by land, sea and air routes, and together they require all the manpower, machinery, skill and coordination we can muster to intercept them.

We are proud of the fact that the amount of drugs that have been seized in the last year was up across the board. But we also know that we are only stopping a limited amount of the total drugs that are entering this country and that's why all of our efforts must not only be maintained at the same rate but even stepped up.

We have a National Narcotics Border Interdiction System that coordinates the efforts of the Coast Guard, DEA, the other agencies and which also utilizes resources from all the military departments. We started all of this in 1982 in South Florida which at that time was the principal source of entry into this country smuggling narcotics. The program was so successful there that it's been expanded so that it literally encircles our entire nation.

This has necessitated a substantial support role by the military forces which have been joined into the battle for the first time in history. Their assistance in this interdiction effort has vastly increased over the past three years. We anticipate and welcome even more participation by the military sources.

Here's some of what the military now contributes:

Each year all four military branches together fly about 10,000 hours of flight time in surveillance against the flying in of narcotics in these small planes or various types of planes. As a matter of fact we've even had narcotics flown in on 727s and some of the Saber jets, Lear jets and the like which have been apprehended and planes confiscated.

The Army has lent technologically advanced aircraft to U.S. Customs, including the newest Black Hawk helicopters, 2 Mohawks, 4 Cobras and 11 light observation helicopters. It also provides various night vision imaging systems and specialized training.

The Air Force, as you might imagine, provides air support including reconnaissance flights and also airlifts for DEA agents and even foreign police to locations where drug shipments are reported abroad.

The Navy keeps ships on call in the Key West area, for example, and also provides radar support, ship sighting, and when necessary, the towing of the confiscated drug ships.

The Marine Corps has been cooperating by providing ground radar surveillance and anti-personnel intrusion devices.

All of the Services have been using their most up to date equipment in this battle against narcotics. Well, this Defense Department participation has provided benefits both ways. Not only has it been of great help in the battle against narcotics but also the Military has been rewarded with real-life training opportunities. Military personnel are reportedly very enthusiastic about using their surveillance skills against actual drug smuggling targets.

The other supply front against which we are waging war on drugs is here at home. One of the most recent new crops in this country -- a budding homegrown agricultural industry -- has been the growing of marijuana. Not only in private lands but also in some of our national forests. Consequently we have begun a domestic eradication program to go hand in hand with the

interdiction program that I just described. Last year, the federal government had an eradication program in 48 states. Those states reported eradicating over 12 million marijuana plants (an increase of 250 percent over the previous years).

This summer, as I'm sure you've read, we launched Operation Delta-9, a 50-state marijuana eradication program. The results of that operation have been excellent. It's been excellent not only in marijuana plants that were destroyed but also in the number of arrests made and the number of weapons that have been confiscated.

Well, as impressive as all of these achievements may be, we still have a long ways to go. The clandestine drug networks that have been established and have become entrenched over the past several years are very difficult to deal with. We have only begun in this country to devote the resources and to use the tools that are needed to compete with these sophisticated international syndicates. Over the next several years, we will continue to press this fight as our top law enforcement priority, as you heard Jim mention during the introduction.

But I would suggest to you tonight that the ultimate success against drug trafficking really is going to begin and is going to end at home. Whether we succeed in the long run is going to depend really upon the American people themselves. No amount of law enforcement will ever be sufficient to provide the resources against the drug supply or truly eliminate the scourge of drugs from our society as long as our citizens, particularly our young people, choose to use drugs.

President Reagan said it very well last year when he made the statement that, "No matter how effective we are against the pushers and the drug smugglers, it still comes down to our young people making the right choice. The choice that keeps them free of drugs."

We as parents and as citizens cannot avoid having some responsibility for whether young people use drugs. We all have a responsibility to help them make the right choice. It is for this reason that the Drug Enforcement Administration is taking the lead in the federal government and joining the Department of Health and Human Services and other departments that have traditionally been in the medical education field so that people who are involved in enforcement are also turning their attention to this demand side of drug use.

DEA has joined with high school coaches, police, and celebrities and various other organizations to prevent drug abuse in the schools. As I mentioned earlier, Nancy Reagan, our First Lady, has become very active throughout the country in focusing our attention on the tragedy of drugs. Her recent conference of 17 other First Ladies made it clear that this tragedy is not limited to our shores. As a matter of fact a second conference of First Ladies which will be even more widely attended than the first will be taking place in this country during October.

Well, as I mentioned earlier when I recited these statistics, some progress is being made on the prevention and control of drug abuse. In the last 10 years the number of high school seniors who use marijuana daily has been cut in half.

While a majority of those high school seniors now consider the regular use of marijuana harmful and dangerous, one-third of those seniors still use marijuana on at least a monthly basis. Part of this reason is because some powerful forces in our society continue to encourage the use of drugs either expressly or implicitly. These extend from the glamorization of drug use and the media to the public use of drugs by social, cultural, professional, entertainment and athletic leaders. People who serve as role models for our society, particularly for young people. It is important that our entire nation realize that whether one sells one hundred million dollars worth of drugs or only uses them occasionally every drug user, every participant in drugs, either as a user or as a pusher or as a dealer is supporting those who are ultimately are skimming off the top profits by dealing in terror, torture and death.

Users may think that they are only purchasing pleasure for themselves. But they are also wholesaling misery to literally millions of people in foreign countries and some in this country who are oppressed by drug trafficking. We have to learn as a nation that there can be no neutrals in the war on drugs. There are no bystanders. The responsibility to fight the tolerance of drug use in our society lies squarely on the shoulders of all Americans.

I am proud that my fellow Kiwanians understand this fact and that our club has joined with many other organizations to oppose drug use. As we start the last third of the first century of this club I am sure that this effort will be among the many

examples of outstanding service that our club will render to this community, and I can't think of a better objective than to join with the other citizens of our nation and to use every effort we can to rid our country of the scourge of illegal drugs.

Thank you.