

**ADDRESS BY ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO BEFORE  
THE ONDCP REGIONAL DRUG STRATEGY CONFERENCE**

**December 11, 1995  
Miami, Florida**

**I. Introduction.**

Thank you, Lee, for that introduction and for the outstanding leadership you have provided this Nation.

When I left Miami almost three years ago, I arrived in Washington with first-hand knowledge of the problems caused by drug abuse. I saw families torn apart by drugs; I saw children cut down in turf battles over drugs; I saw obscene profits and opulent lifestyles. I watched the users become younger, the drugs become more devastating, and the dealers become more violent. I witnessed crack cocaine decimate entire communities. I prosecuted literally thousands of dealers and users -- from South American traffickers to

well-heeled professionals to kids who lived in my neighborhood. No one had to tell me that drug abuse was one of the most serious problems facing our country.

Armed with that knowledge and experience, I came to the Justice Department determined to help the President attack the drug problem in the smartest and most effective way possible. I did not offer simple solutions or promise quick fixes. I simply made sure that drug enforcement was a Department priority and got to work -- together with Director Brown and other Administration officials -- to make the best use of federal resources in the fight against drugs.

Three years later, we see some encouraging signs. Overall drug use -- particularly use of marijuana and cocaine, the two most prevalent illegal drugs -- is down almost 50 percent since 1985. Violent crime rates are down in many large cities. And some of the world's most dangerous drug traffickers have been brought to justice.

But make no mistake. Drug abuse -- and the violence, the social disruption and the economic loss that comes with it -- continues to plague our society. And recent trends in adolescent drug use and use of more dangerous drugs like heroin, LSD, and methamphetamine suggest that the problem may get worse before it gets better.

That is why we must redouble our efforts. That is why reduction of drug abuse continues to be one of this Administration's top priorities.

## **II. The Department's Drug Strategy**

Distribution and use of illegal drugs is unique among America's criminal justice problems. First, more Americans have engaged in

illegal drug use than any other serious crime. A staggering 77 million Americans report having used illegal drugs sometime during their lifetime. And, unlike most other crimes, virtually every illegal drug transaction takes place within a complex web of financial and business relationships stretching from faraway jungles to local street corners. And perhaps most strikingly, each drug transaction that takes place in America is inter-connected with a wide range of other problems facing our country: violence, street crime, family breakup, guns, urban decay, homelessness, AIDS. The list goes on and on.

Because drugs reach so deep into our society and because they exacerbate so many other problems, our efforts to combat them must be far-reaching and comprehensive. They must be both domestic and international in focus; they must combine enforcement and prevention; they must incorporate all levels of government and all agencies within government; and, in this time of fiscal restraint, they must be cost-effective and smart.

The strategy we have employed at the Justice Department over the last three years is all those things. It rests on three inter-related and equally-important pillars:

- Tough domestic law enforcement against the largest and most violent drug trafficking organizations doing business in this county;
- Innovative international enforcement focused primarily on disrupting and dismantling major organizations that export narcotics to this country; and finally,
- Smart and cost-effective prevention and treatment programs that break the link between drug use and violent crime.

### **III. Treatment and Prevention**

I have spoken time and again during my tenure as Attorney General about this last aspect of our approach to drugs, and I want to reiterate my support for it here. Drug treatment, education, and prevention -- no less than law enforcement -- are critical elements of the Administration's drug strategy.

It is estimated that more than half of the nearly 350,000 offenders who enter America's prisons each year are substance abusers. Which means that to attack crime seriously, we must begin to treat the abuse that so often causes it. Drug-dependent offenders should be required to undergo drug treatment in prison -- and continued monitoring and support while they're on parole -- so that they don't return to a life of crime when they reenter society. Research clearly demonstrates that felons who receive both treatment and aftercare are far less likely to commit further crimes than those

who do not.

And for non-violent offenders, Drug Court programs that combine mandatory testing, comprehensive treatment, and tough sanctions for offenders who continue to use drugs, are a cost-effective way to prevent our jails from being revolving doors back to street crime. I helped start the Drug Court here in Miami; I know Drug Courts can work if they're done right; and I urge Congress to provide explicit funding for them.

Those of you here from the treatment and prevention community should be extremely proud of your efforts. Every week, I hear about a particular program somewhere in the country that has had remarkable results. And behind each of those programs are dedicated professionals like yourselves. Last year, the Clinton Administration spent about 4.5 billion dollars on drug treatment and prevention programs nationwide, and I think we should be doing even more.

For fiscal year 1996, the President has requested an additional 300 million dollars for treatment and prevention. These are vital and cost-effective programs and we should support them.

#### **IV. Domestic Enforcement**

As important as prevention and treatment are, I would like to take this opportunity here in Miami to discuss in more detail this Administration's approach to drug enforcement, with particular emphasis on some of our recent -- and I think very promising -- international enforcement efforts.

First, domestic enforcement.

When I travel this country and talk to everyday Americans, particularly our children, I hear one message repeated over and over



again: "Stop the violence in our communities."

Violence is such a destructive force in our communities and in our Nation. Not just in terms of the personal loss that accompanies acts of violent crime, but also in terms of the immeasurable effect it has had on our national psyche. Violent crime -- and the fear it spawns -- breeds a basic lack of trust among citizens and with it a withdrawal from social and civic engagement. That withdrawal, in turn, leads to the economic, social, and spiritual disintegration of our communities -- the very communities that we must strengthen and build in order to reduce violence. We as a Nation must do everything possible to break this vicious cycle.

There are of course many, many causes of the unacceptable level of violence in America today. But one thing is certain: one of the most significant and most direct causes of violence is the use and trafficking of illegal narcotics. The Justice Department estimates that

once every seven hours in 1993, an American was murdered as a result of the drug trade. And thousands of other violent crimes are committed each year by persons under the influence of drugs.

The Administration's domestic drug enforcement strategy tries to break this link between drugs and violence in each and every community in this country. To that end, the Justice Department's primary efforts are focused on using the full arsenal of federal enforcement tools -- in close cooperation with local law enforcement - - against the largest and most violent drug trafficking organizations operating in the United States.

Increasingly, these organizations are highly sophisticated, well financed, and extremely resilient. Our approach therefore is to target these organizations in their entirety -- from the highest echelon to the dealer on the street. We treat them like the sophisticated businesses they are and use tools such as wiretaps, the conspiracy laws, the

Continuing Criminal Enterprise statute, and the forfeiture and money-laundering laws to attack all aspects of their infrastructure.

Where appropriate, we also use tough criminal provisions like the death penalty for drug kingpins, mandatory life without parole, and the "three-strikes" law contained in last year's Crime Act.

Recognizing that much of the nation's law enforcement responsibility rests with state and local authorities, the Justice Department has forged unprecedented relationships with local law enforcement in the fight against drugs.

In fact, many of our most significant drug and gang prosecutions are a direct result of these close relationships. Our Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) -- which bring together federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutors in coordinated investigations -- have been extremely effective in

mustering law enforcement against those criminals who cause the greatest harm to our communities and our Nation.

One of the many examples of this successful partnership came last August, when the United States Attorney in Chicago -- along with local and state law enforcement officials -- announced indictments against thirty-nine members, including the top leaders, of the Gangster Disciples, a notorious, ruthless, and heretofore intractable Chicago-area gang. We charged the gang members with operating a multi-million dollar narcotics enterprise, extortion and money laundering. Large-scale prosecutions like this are occurring all over the country.

Another key component of the Department's anti-drug efforts is community policing. With last year's Crime Act, the Administration made a commitment to the American people to put 100,000 new police officers on the streets of America -- a commitment we are well

on our way to fulfilling. At last count, over 25,000 new police officers had been hired since the Crime Act went into effect -- including 442 here in South Florida.

But it is not just the number of officers we are committed to. More importantly, it is to the new and different approach to law enforcement that each of these officers will take. Community policing means getting out of the squad cars and precinct houses and onto the beat. It means getting to know and working with community members to identify the dealers and their suppliers, to shut down the crack houses and shooting galleries, and to head off the drug-related violence before it occurs.

It also means results. In Jefferson Parish, Louisiana -- right across the Mississippi River from New Orleans -- a community policing initiative called Project Star is credited with freeing a community from the terror inflicted by local violent drug dealers.

The worst dealers have been put out of business and violent crime has decreased by 60 percent since the start of the program.

## V. International Enforcement

No matter how encouraging stories like this are, domestic law enforcement alone is no answer to our drug problem. We must also continue to work hard on the international front, as every year, hundreds of tons of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and marijuana pour into this country from around the world.

Recent years have seen a gradual shift of federal resources away from traditional drug interdiction efforts. Although interdiction still plays a necessary and vital role, our international narcotics enforcement strategy is focused more on attacking the leadership and infrastructure of major trafficking organizations within the drug-

supplying countries of the world.

This is not an easy task. It requires hard work on many fronts:

- it requires investigating and prosecuting international drug trafficking organizations doing business in the United States, and pressing other countries to do the same;
- it requires eradicating crops and processing facilities;
- it requires working with source countries to train law enforcement, enhance their judiciaries, and fortify democratic institutions so that they can deal with their own criminals;
- it requires working through bilateral and multilateral channels with countries that have demonstrated the political



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will to join us in fighting this problem -- and bringing

~~international pressure on those that have not; and~~

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- it requires enacting international crime legislation to provide severe and certain penalties for major narcotics traffickers, criminalize money laundering, and ensure the forfeiture of ill-gotten gains.

In this hemisphere, our principal -- but by no means sole -- efforts have been in Colombia and now Mexico.

Colombia.

In Colombia -- which we estimate supplies 80 percent of the cocaine and 15 percent of the heroin entering the country -- U.S. law enforcement has found able and courageous partners in Colombian Fiscal General Valdivieso [VAL-DEE-VEE-AY-SO] and Colombian National Police Director Serrano [SER-AH-NO]. As a result of our



joint efforts with these officials, three top leaders of the Cali drug cartel and four of their chief lieutenants and are now in custody in Colombia.

Unfortunately, as is often the case in drug-producing countries, merely prosecuting these criminals in Colombia is likely to be insufficient to seriously disrupt the operations of the Cartel. First, past experience suggests that they will receive relatively short prison terms, somewhere on the order of seven to eight years. Second, their vast criminal fortunes will remain untouched because Colombia lacks any effective forfeiture law. Third, the Cali leaders may well continue their illicit trade while in jail, with the aid of their families and underlings. And fourth, they will almost surely resume their international narcotics trade once they are released.

Because of these impediments, we have searched for new and innovative tools and novel uses of existing statutory authorities in the

fight against the Cali cartel. Recently, for example, President Clinton announced the imposition of economic sanctions against the cartel using the International Economic Emergency Powers Act -- "IEEPA".

IEEPA is essentially a war powers act. In the past, IEEPA sanctions have banned all trade with Iran, Iraq, and Libya, and have also been applied against Middle Eastern terrorist organizations whose acts of violence threatened the Middle Eastern peace process.

Drawing an analogy to the threat posed by terrorists, President Clinton in October declared that international drug traffickers based in Colombia -- the so-called "Cali cartel" -- posed an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. And in his recent address to the U.N. General Assembly at its 50th anniversary celebrations, the President announced the imposition of IEEPA sanctions against the cartel and urged other nations to take corresponding action.

The sanctions are severe. They block all assets in the United States of the four cartel leaders, 43 of their front companies, and 33 individuals who acted in support of or on behalf of the leadership. It also bars any U.S. "persons", including corporations, anywhere in the world, from engaging in any financial transaction or commerce with those on the list.

We have already seen a positive effect from the IEEPA sanctions:

- Some of the cartel's assets have been blocked;
- U.S. Fortune 500 companies have halted-trade with cartel-controlled companies in Colombia;
- And, most encouraging, we are starting to see the beginnings of a ripple effect. The Colombian press has

reported that four major Colombian banks have closed the accounts of the individuals and entities on the list. And Colombian companies that are separately incorporated but affiliated with U.S. corporations have stopped doing business with cartel companies, even though they are technically not prohibited from doing so under the Order.

Over the coming months, we will continue to tighten the screws on the cartel. We intend to broadcast this initiative to other developed countries whose companies might be called upon to fill the gap left by the US embargo. And we will attempt to persuade the European Union and the G-7 that their corporations should also stop dealing with these international pariahs. The cartel's continued vitality is not in any country's interest.

We also will supplement this list of individuals and front companies with the names of others who facilitate the trade or act on

behalf of the traffickers. And finally, we will identify other commercial, trade, and economic pressures and sanctions that can be brought to bear against the traffickers and used as leverage with Colombia to take aggressive steps of its own.

In sum, our goal is to expose, isolate, and strangle the Cali cartel until it is completely out of commission.

### Mexico.

Our initial successes in Colombia in many ways serve as a challenge to the Mexican authorities to replicate them against the powerful drug trafficking organizations that operate in Mexico and penetrate our Southwest Border. We think they can, but we will need the full cooperation and dedication of our Mexican counterparts.

It is estimated that about 70 percent of all cocaine entering the U.S. comes across the Southwest border, in addition to substantial

quantities of heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine. To stem this tide of drugs, we have combined aggressive interdiction efforts at the border itself with significant investigative and prosecutive initiatives against major Mexican trafficking organizations. On a parallel track, the Department is pursuing the enhancement of working relationships with our Mexican counterparts which will advance the overall goals of our border efforts as well as overall Department of Justice narcotics policies.

While I am limited in what I can say about particular investigations and geographic focus within Mexico, I can tell you about some encouraging initial results.

In one recent case, we charged twenty-two members of the Guzman-Loera [GOOZ-MAHN LO-EHR-AH] narcotics trafficking organization with constructing a 1,450 foot tunnel from Mexico to California, used for drug smuggling. The charges are the result of a

multi-jurisdictional investigation that targeted the Mexico City-based drug trafficking organization headed by Joaquin Guzman-Loera, who is currently in custody in Mexico in connection with the killing of a Mexican Cardinal. To date, seven individuals have been arrested in the United States and over seven tons of cocaine have been seized.

It is also alleged that the organization transported U.S. currency in Lear jets and continued to operate by paying bribes to Mexican officials, including a one million dollar cash payment to a Commandante of the Mexican Federal Judicial Police.

## **VI. Conclusion**

We are obviously encouraged by results like these, but much more has to be done. The power and sophistication of today's drug traffickers requires aggressive and innovative responses like those I have described today. They will not rest, so we must not rest. Both at home and abroad, the threat posed by drugs must inform virtually

every law enforcement policy we develop and put in force.

The President, Director Brown, and I are committed to reducing drug use and drug trafficking and, together, we send out these messages:

- \* to international drug traffickers -- that we will use all weapons at our disposal to keep your drugs off our streets;
  
- \* to drug dealers -- that we will use the law enforcement tools of this nation to stop and punish your illegal and immoral drug trade;
  
- \* to drug-dependent offenders -- that we will punish you, but also help you treat your dependency; and



\* to the young people of this nation -- that drug use is not attractive or cool or safe, but illegal and dangerous.

We must all join in these messages because so much is at stake.

It is a matter of saving our communities, our schools, our children.

And it is a matter of our security as a Nation. Thank you very much.