



Department of Justice

"OBJECTIVES IN THE WAR ON DRUGS"

REMARKS

BY

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AT THE

GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO
WEDNESDAY, MAY 2, 1990

I am indeed honored to address this Governor's Substance Abuse Prevention Planning Summit. Governor Carruthers has taken the lead in formulating and coordinating a viable drug policy for New Mexico and I salute him as well as those of you who have taken such an active role in drug enforcement and in achieving drug demand reduction. Defeating the problem of substance abuse will require just the sort of commitment demonstrated by your presence here.

Let me begin today by looking with you at the real nature of those crimes that go hand-in-hand with drugs -- the dirty hand which clasps the bloody hand, together forming the death grip of the drug abuser and the drug trafficker.

Increasingly, these days we are hearing naive talk about drug-abuse as "a victimless crime." We hear pundits, professors, and even judges, learnedly proposing to legalize drugs. This talk, I suggest, ignores the lessons of the street and indicates we still have a big job to do to make people recognize the true risks that are associated with drugs.

Drugs are not a victimless crime. Far from it. Consider the risks to the institutions which undergird our society and our values: families, schools, businesses, even our system of democracy itself. Not to mention the enormous costs that must be borne -- eventually -- by every citizen and taxpayer.

In the next fiscal year, the federal government will spend over \$10.6 billion dollars nationwide in support of our National Drug Control Strategy. About one fourth of that will go to directly support state and local anti-drug activities. New Mexico alone will receive more than \$3 million in grants from our Department of Justice. This award constitutes an over threefold increase from the \$1 million your state received in 1989. Your New Mexico grant money will be used to support multijurisdictional task force projects in seven regions of the state and provide funding for three new additional narcotics trafficking task forces. But even with such funding, how can you ever "offset" what drugs have already done to the families of substance abusers? How can you ever "recover" the terrible cost to the children of drug addicts -- especially those babies who enter into the world thrashing, trying to shake the shackles of a crack addiction they were born with?

Drugs a victimless crime? Think about the level of violence and homicide that attends the current crime wave, and then recall that well over half of those arrested for non-drug felonies test positive for drugs. With every drug purchase, whether its made on some dark urban street corner or behind a rural barn, that transaction represents that last stage in a criminal business enterprise that, in terms of production, marketing, and distribution, rivals the most efficient of legitimate, multi-

national consumer businesses. That one drug purchase -- and hundreds of thousands like it -- support a network of multinational criminal conglomerates, which not only contribute to our domestic strife and the dissolution of our communities, but who also threaten the very democracies of our South American allies.

A victimless crime? The National Transportation Safety Board reported earlier this year that 33 percent of the truck drivers killed last year were impaired by drugs or alcohol, exposing countless other drug-free drivers to the risk of accident, injury, or death.

Those are only some of the risks, and each of you here knows of many others, I am sure.

But what of responsibility? Who must face up to the daunting challenge of facing down drug abusers and drug traffickers. Everyone turns first, of course, to Uncle Sam. One of the most famous of fables is, "I'm from the federal government and I'm here to help." We are here to help, but it's no accident that President Bush's strategy is called a National Drug Control Strategy, not a federal one.

Yes, your federal government does have an important role to play in the war on drugs. Clearly, there are some things that only the federal government can do: such as working across state lines and international boundaries with our foreign counterparts, creating national and international intelligence networks, and dismantling the upper-most echelons of major criminal drug trafficking enterprises.

In the next few moments I'd like to highlight for you some of the major areas where we will be focusing the federal effort. It will quickly become apparent that there is a role here for everyone, and I'm not speaking just about government and its institutions. We must count on the unqualified support of many disciplines throughout American society -- many of you represented here today: business, education, health care, and perhaps, most important, parents and individual citizens. We must all do our part. And we must work together, as true partners, if we're going to make a difference, one of the reasons our Law Enforcement Coordinating Committees are so important.

From a law enforcement perspective, our responsibility is to disrupt, dismantle, and destroy drug trafficking enterprises. This ambitious agenda reaches across the full spectrum of drug activity. Last year New Mexican drug interdiction agencies were responsible for the seizure of the largest indoor marijuana

growing operation found in the nation. Three tons of marijuana so strong it was nicknamed "Kryptonite" was found growing in extremely sophisticated factories disguised as ranches. Forty agents from the DEA and other agencies launched a military-style assault on the farms at 6:15 a.m. With raids such as I have just described, we intend to disrupt the drug marketplace by displacing growers and users alike. We intend to dismantle drug trafficking organizations by incapacitating their leadership and by seizing and forfeiting the immense profits and proceeds derived from their illegal activities.

Nationwide, our forfeitures exceeded a half billion dollars last year -- \$160 million of which was turned back to cooperating state and local agencies. Last October, \$600,000 in drug money seized at a Border Patrol checkpoint -- the largest single disbursement of tainted assets in New Mexico -- was presented to Las Cruces Metro Narcotics Agency.

As the President's National Drug Control Strategy emphasizes, there is a progression in our partnership efforts to fight the drug problem. Under the President's strategy, federal spending for drug law enforcement on the Southwest Border will go up by 16 percent next year. In addition, another \$25 million will be provided as a direct result of the Border being declared a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area. These funds will be

allocated shortly for the purchase of communications and other equipment for use on the Border, and for support of the Border's anti-drug efforts.

Realistically, however, most of the enforcement activity directed toward street trafficking will come from the local and municipal levels of law enforcement. But as we collectively direct our enforcement efforts further up the trafficking chain away from the purchaser to the retail sellers, to the mid-level distributors, and to the wholesalers, there is a need for increasingly more cooperation among the federal, state, and local branches of government. Many of these efforts result from informal arrangements with two or more police departments working together against a common target. But still other enforcement endeavors are the result of longstanding, established interagency cooperation, such as Operation Alliance, composed of federal law enforcement agencies and representatives from the four states which have borders with Mexico: California, Arizona, Texas and New Mexico.

The President's Drug Strategy recognizes such task forces for what they are -- models of effective, intergovernmental cooperation dedicated to dismantling organized drug networks at the highest possible level. These task forces capitalize on the skills of separate federal agencies, including the DEA, FBI, and

INS, as well as U.S. Customs and significant support from state and local agencies.

In New Mexico you are fortunate as well to have an excellent Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee, directed by Ken Berry in U.S. Attorney Bill Lutz's office. The past year has been a busy one; there have been a number of conferences for state and local law enforcement officials on pivotal issues such as narcotics, asset forfeiture, bank fraud and equitable sharing. The LECC also organized and co-sponsored the eighth annual Victims' Rights Conference last Thursday. The Victim/Witness Subcommittee and the Bank Fraud Working Group are among other high profile and productive LECC subcommittees.

I'd like to turn from American states like New Mexico for a moment and focus on another America -- Latin America -- as it relates to our international endeavors. As you know, President Bush met recently with the Presidents of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru at the Cartagena Summit to arrive at ways in which cooperation can be enhanced to strengthen comprehensive assaults against the production, trafficking, and consumption of illegal drugs. Two weeks ago, as a follow up to that summit, I met with my law enforcement counterparts from the Organization of American States in Ixtapa, Mexico, to help frame a hemisphere-wide effort to crack down on drug trafficking and money laundering.

Events of the past year in our hemisphere can give us many reasons for hope. The level of enforcement activity in Colombia is unprecedented. Not only has President Virgilio Barco stood firm in the face of the assaults of the narco-traffickers; he also showed his courage and mettle in extraditing by decree some 15 of their nationals to the United States to stand trial for drug trafficking violations.

No less exciting has been the end to the tyranny in Panama, whose self-declared ruler now awaits trial in Florida for drug trafficking.

These tales are every bit as exciting as Tom Clancy's Clear and Present Danger, but they're a true testament to that special courage of narcotics officers everywhere in the world, beginning here at home.

Let there be no mistake. We all yearn for what President Bush has described as a kinder and gentler America. But we also recognize that, in order to achieve a kinder and gentler nation for all Americans, we're going to have to get rougher and tougher with some Americans -- those involved in drug trafficking and the violence it inevitably spawns. Those who choose to violate our laws must, and will, be held responsible, and that's a job for all of us in law enforcement.

But we also recognize that this war won't be won by the committed men and women who police our streets and communities -- alone. And it won't be won by soldiers in the Andean mountains -- alone. The war on drugs will only be won when all of our citizens are enlisted as foot soldiers. When all of our citizens recognize the threat of drugs, and when all are prepared to do something about it -- to help restore the sense of values which rules out drug dependency as an acceptable life style.

No, law enforcement solutions alone will never solve the drug problem. We must also reduce the demand for drugs -- one of the goals of the President's Drug Control Strategy and of your Governor's Drug Policy Advisory Board, established to address the directions New Mexico will go in drug demand reduction policy. The objectives of this summit and the concerned decision makers it has attracted are the other half -- many would say the more important half -- of what it is we do in the law enforcement field. For without community recognition that drugs are poisoning our society, law enforcement efforts are to an extent stymied. Today I have shared with you some of our law enforcement objectives. Drug prevention projects not only dovetail nicely with our enforcement goals -- demand reduction will be the absolutely essential component of forever eradicating drugs in the United States.

We must provide more and better programs of prevention, education, rehabilitation and treatment. This summit is an example of what can be achieved through collaborative efforts. I would like to see statewide drug prevention programs planned and implemented across the United States -- programs such as this one -- which will call attention to the need for comprehensive drug prevention and engage many different segments of our communities in restoring those positive, family values which are ultimately the most fundamental basis for drug prevention.

We recognize that government, alone, will never solve the problems associated with drug abuse. Therefore, we are actively working with all of our communities to mobilize them in support of worthwhile demand reduction activities. We cannot dismiss the power of public opinion -- the essential element of any demand reduction activity. We must inspire the will of the people to say no to drug trafficking and the social havoc it wreaks. We must use the court of public opinion to support government initiatives to reduce supply and demand. We must increase intolerance for drugs in ours and every nation. But, all the while, we must keep up a sustained law enforcement effort -- our part of what you all are accomplishing here today.

In all of our efforts, our goal must be clear. It is an America -- and a world -- where "pot" once again means a useful

cooking utensil, where "crack" is the sound of a baseball hitting a bat, where "grass" is something to mow, not to smoke, and where "heroin(e)" means a Helen Keller, a Christa McAuliffe, a Sandra Day O'Connor and yes, a Barbara Bush.

That is a goal toward which we all can, and should, persevere. Thank you and Godspeed in your efforts.