



# Department of Justice

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AN ADDRESS BY

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ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

at the

ATLANTA POLICE APPRECIATION DINNER

ATLANTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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NOTE: This is the official text of Attorney General Mitchell's speech. It may be fully quoted and attributed to him. Due to time limitations, however, a shorter version will be delivered.

A week ago I spoke before the California Peace Officers Association, meeting in San Francisco. I discussed the danger of permitting violent mobs to rob the civil rights of others, and I applauded the Washington, D. C. police for their professional handling of such disruptions early this month. I pointed out that the President of the United States shared this approval of the Washington police, and that he supported the role of peace officers across the nation in protecting the rights of law-abiding citizens against the inroads of lawless mobs. It was, in effect, a "police appreciation" speech, and I call your attention to it by way of reaffirming my support of the police and their essential role in American society. As President Nixon has said, "Unless we have not only respect for our laws, but for the men and women who are doing their very best to carry them out fairly and equitably, we are not going to survive as a free country."

So because I think you know where I stand and where the President stands in appreciation of the police and their function, I am not going to give another speech on this subject tonight. Instead I would like to discuss a particular area of enforcement in which Federal, state and local agencies have parallel duties--the control of narcotics and dangerous drugs.

One of several reasons this is a mutual problem among all jurisdictions is the relationship believed to exist between drugs and crime. The high

cost of hard drugs creates in the addict a daily need for money by any possible means. In-depth interviews of 26 male addicts who were treated in New York City indicated that they had been collectively responsible for an average of 22 major crimes a day--somewhat less than one crime per addict per day. In a sampling of men admitted to the District of Columbia jail, 45 percent gave evidence of drug use just before arrest. Other studies show smaller percentages. More research is needed on this subject, but there is reason to believe that, as we solve the drug problem, we will also solve an important part of the crime problem.

For many years, efforts in this field have been under fire from the "can't do it" people. They've said you can't end the narcotics evil by trying to stop the narcotics traffic. Some have said, "Let's legalize the possession of drugs and provide them free under a doctor's care." According to this argument the addicts won't have to steal to get money for dope. And by taking the profit out of the illicit traffic the pushers would go out of business.

This is the approach taken in Great Britain, and in the opinion of our observers it is proving to be wrong. The dope pushers have moved into Britain in a big way, and are providing narcotics to the addict over and above what he receives through medical care. And there is a tendency of pushers and addicts alike to spread the disease.

So what I would call the "surrender" approach hasn't proven itself. This leaves the alternative of trying to improve the enforcement approach--improve it to the point where we do drive the drug peddlers out of business.

This is the approach that Richard Nixon took when he became President in 1969. One of his earliest steps was to outline a 10-point program to mobilize all the resources of Government against this problem. His belief was that in past efforts, the Government's left hand sometimes didn't know what the right hand was doing. If we could marshal all our Federal efforts in a campaign coordinated with the states and localities, we could win this battle. He was confident that in this field, as in others, if America really focuses its energies and its skills, there is no problem it can't solve. As distinguished from the "you can't do it" attitude, I call this the "can do" approach.

What President Nixon outlined was, in essence, a massive squeeze play on the narcotics problem, and this squeezeplay has been put in motion.

On the one hand, the Federal Government is leading a broad program of drug education, treatment and research. This is being spearheaded by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and in particular by the National Institute of Mental Health. The purpose is, first, to educate all Americans to the dangers of drug abuse and thus help prevent the creation of new addicts; second, to rehabilitate existing addicts and return them to useful lives; and third, to learn more about the causes

of addiction and the effects of drugs, so we can improve our prevention and treatment programs. I'm proud that among the other participants in this program are three Justice Department agencies--the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, the Bureau of Prisons, and the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. The Federal Government's program of drug education, treatment, and research is under constant review and we can expect new initiatives in this area.

On the other side of this squeeze play, we have marshaled all enforcement agencies in a coordinated drive. And we are going after all our adversaries -- the foreign growers and manufacturers, the smugglers who cross our borders, the organized crime distributors within our country, the manufacturers of dangerous drugs here at home, and finally, the pushers on our streets.

This is the first time the United States has brought to bear all its guns on this target. And although we have helped promote narcotics treaties before, this is the first Administration that has made narcotics control a continuing and integral part of American foreign policy.

The main Federal enforcement arm against the dope traffic is the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, or as we call it, the BNDD. It is responsible for fighting the narcotics trade both overseas and here at home.

Of course, when BNDD started to carry out President Nixon's program it encountered the "you can't do that" people. They said "You'll never get the foreign governments involved to give you any more than lip service."

It so happens we have a "can do" President, and a "can do" Department of Justice, and a "can do" Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. And starting with the top officials of the Department of State, as well as our ambassadors overseas, our diplomatic corps has joined in the battle. As a result of efforts by the United States and other countries, the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs created a special fund for anti-narcotics programs, and the United States has led the way in pledging \$2 million to this fund. Last February, under the leadership of the United States and other countries, an international treaty was signed in Vienna by 20 nations to control the traffic of dangerous drugs.

Besides this international approach, we are also working directly with individual countries that are the source of illicit drugs.

BNDD representatives are in Turkey, the present source of most opium-type narcotics coming into the United States. They are working in cooperation with the Turkish national police and federal narcotics officers to combat the illicit trade. We have loaned \$3 million to Turkey for law enforcement and other purposes, and Turkey is also applying considerable financial

resources of its own. The new Turkish premier, Dr. Nihat Erim, has publicly committed himself very strongly to stopping the illicit opium traffic. Less than three weeks ago he promised the international community to bring opium production under strict control by licensing the farmers, buying the entire annual crop, and helping the farmers to convert to other types of crops. In the Turkish National Assembly, the opium licensing and control bill was recently reported favorably out of committee and now goes to the whole assembly for consideration. We're pleased with the cooperation of the Turkish Government. The problem isn't licked yet, but Turkey has joined us in saying, "can do!"

Turning to France, where the illicit Turkish product has been converted to heroin in laboratories around Marseilles, we are also giving an answer to the "can't do it" people. For many months we have developed a cooperative program with the French authorities, from the Minister of the Interior to the national police. At our urging the French have expanded their anti-narcotics force in the Marseilles and Paris areas from 18 to about 100. They are training all of the 60,000 national police in narcotics enforcement, and BNDD agents are helping to instruct them. Last February the French Minister of the Interior and I signed an agreement enabling enforcement agencies of the two countries to work together in combatting the drug traffic. This is the first such formal agreement between two countries for cooperation at the working level.

What about Mexico, which is a smaller source of opium but the principal source of marihuana? For nearly a year and a half our Department of Justice and Bureau of Customs have worked with Mexico in a joint program, Operation Cooperation, to destroy poppy and marihuana production in Mexico and intercept smugglers. This program has the support of the President of Mexico, and the Mexican Attorney General has met with me on three occasions to further this effort. The United States has provided helicopters and other equipment for hunting out and destroying poppy and marihuana production, and they have been used effectively by the Mexican forces. The federal police have established a narcotics unit, and many traffickers have been arrested--often on information developed jointly by U. S. and Mexican narcotics authorities. Far from being a flop, as the skeptics predicted, Operation Cooperation has become a model for other nations in their joint anti-narcotics programs.

The countries I mentioned are among the principal sources of illicit drugs coming to this country, but when we choke off these sources, others will try to take their places. We are alert to this, and will be ready for them. Meanwhile, two other nations concerned over their own rising drug abuse problem--Great Britain and West Germany--are also joining us in applying pressure at the drug sources.

So in the international area we're making clear headway, where very little was done before. To those who said it was impossible we are answering with that familiar American saying, "The difficult we do immediately; the impossible takes a little longer."

Let's turn to the next line of defense--our nation's 20,000 miles of borders and coastlines. The U. S. Bureau of Customs in the Treasury Department is primarily responsible for this, and it also has some specialists assigned with our BNDD people overseas. In its border narcotics work it is assisted by the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization--part of the Justice Department. To step up the campaign against narcotics as outlined by President Nixon, Customs has greatly increased its force, its training, and its knowhow. It has adopted new methods, such as the training of dogs to sniff out the presence of drugs in luggage at ports of entry or packages mailed into the country. Due to these efforts I can announce tonight that in the first ten months of fiscal 1971--up to April 30--Customs seized nearly nine times the hard drugs seized in the same period in 1970, and nearly double the amount of marihuana. In the same periods of time the Immigration and Naturalization Service seized three times as much hard narcotics and somewhat less than double the amount of marihuana. Another part of the Justice Department, the U. S. Marshals Service, has seized 1 1/2 million dollars' worth of narcotics as an incidental part of its anti-skyjacking program since October 1969.

So we are witnessing what can be accomplished when you coordinate the efforts of these dedicated agencies and their "can do" people--with a little help from some "can do" german shepherds and labrador retrievers.

The illicit drugs that run the gamut of the first two defenses must next get past the alert eyes of BNDD's special agents in this country, who concentrate on interstate distribution rings. In response to President Nixon's program, the number of agents has been greatly increased and new legislation has given them better tools.

One such tool is the use of court-authorized wiretapping to obtain evidence against organized crime figures dealing in narcotics. Here again the nay-sayers have told us, "You can't do that--its unconstitutional." But the law provides for a court order for such wiretapping--similar to the warrant for a house search. The Supreme Court indicated this kind of court-authorized wiretapping is constitutional. And we are certainly using it to get evidence against those who make a living destroying the lives of others with dope.

Because of wiretapping we have been able to make numerous raids on big-time narcotics rings that would otherwise have been impossible. In June 1970 wiretapping evidence enabled us to conduct Operation Eagle,

in which BNDD made simultaneous raids in ten U. S. cities and broke up the largest cocaine smuggling ring ever uncovered in the United States. So far, 178 arrests have been made in this operation. Many have not yet been brought to trial, but 75 have already been convicted, and most of these pleaded guilty. Last February, again using wiretap evidence in an effort known as Operation Flanker, BNDD made simultaneous raids which broke up the largest heroin smuggling ring so far unearthed in the United States, for a total to date of 162 persons arrested.

I can promise you that investigations are under way which will result in more of the same. And if the organized criminals engaged in drug distribution get so they're afraid to use the telephone, that's all the better. Then they'll have to come out in the open, where they'll be easier to catch.

I come now to that aspect of enforcement in which the Federal Government has neither the manpower nor the grass roots organization to do the job right. I refer to the continuing battle against your local neighborhood dope pusher--a battle equally as important as the others I have described. This should be and is the responsibility of state and local law enforcement agencies. But even in this field, the Federal Government has provided assistance, and I would like to touch briefly on some of these aids.

First, as a result of meetings between Justice Department and state enforcement officials, we have agreed upon areas of separate responsibility, eliminated areas of duplication, and established modes of cooperation. So far, this agreement has been signed by 28 states, including Georgia.

Second, in cooperation with state experts, a Uniform Controlled Substances Act was approved in 1970 by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws. This is a suggested model state law for dealing with the narcotics problem, and it has been adopted in its essential form by 16 states and two territories. I might take this opportunity to point out in this distinguished and influential company that the Georgia legislature has not yet taken up this suggested legislation. Naturally I hope that the states already operating under this very effective legislation will soon be joined by the great state of Georgia.

Third, BNDD has met with state and local authorities to promote an improved concept known as a Metropolitan Enforcement Group. This enables neighboring communities to share undercover personnel and equipment, and thus upgrade their effectiveness at minimum cost.

I am happy to say that three such Metropolitan Enforcement Groups are operating in Georgia--in Atlanta, in Savannah, and in Chatham County as a whole.

Fourth, our BNDD is pursuing a vigorous training program in narcotics enforcement for state and local peace officers. Last December our 10-week National Training Institute graduated the first class, consisting of 34 officers from 22 states, the District of Columbia, and the Armed Forces. We want these classes to grow in number, and we invite representatives from those police departments who have not yet sent them. BNDD is also sponsoring drug education and prevention programs in local communities.

Fifth, we are giving financial support to state and local agencies for drug education, rehabilitation and special narcotics police units. Our Law Enforcement Assistance Administration provided more than \$7 million for these purposes in 1970 and about \$12 million so far in fiscal 1971. These funds are growing, and are available to states and localities submitting a reasonable plan of action. I might add that Georgia's share grew from \$34,000 in 1970 to nearly half a million in 1971.

Now, with all of the Federal, state and local efforts combined, as President Nixon outlined in his program, we are in a position to close the trap on the drug evil. I don't mean to claim we can achieve an immediate victory. As I told you, the "impossible" takes a little while. But I do say that the failure of the previous hit-and-miss approach is no reason for us to listen to the "can't do it" people. We have mounted the most effective war on narcotics of any Administration in the nation's history. Instead of throwing up our hands, instead of wringing our hands, we have joined hands in a worldwide offensive. I can't tell you how long it will take, but I will tell you that if we keep up the pressure we can crush the narcotics traffic.

Moreover, as our combined efforts succeed, we will also remove a significant percentage of crime. Cooperative work against drugs at all levels will help law enforcement at all levels.

And finally, let me say that words of appreciation to the police forces of America from the U. S. Attorney General and from the President of the United States are all well and good, but we like to think they are matched by deeds. The Federal programs to assist state and local enforcement agencies in combating narcotics are the kind of deeds I mean. They should be understood as tangible evidence of our confidence in, and appreciation of, American law enforcement agencies, including the police of metropolitan Atlanta.