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ADDRESS OF

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ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

AT THE
ANNUAL YOUTH BANQUET OF THE
PASADENA JUNIOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER 27, 1972

Tonight I would like to address this Youth Banquet on a subject that in the past has been filled with a great deal of mystery and misinformation. I refer to the narcotics traffic, and to Federal enforcement against it.

When the Nixon Administration came to office in 1969, some people were saying that the epidemic of drug abuse could never be turned back through law enforcement. Legalize the use of narcotics, they said, and you will make the business unprofitable for the traffickers and also remove one of the causes of crime. Others were saying that, at least, marihuana was harmless and should be legalized. Still others, notably Dr. Timothy Leary, championed the use of LSD as a means of expanding our minds and getting new philosophical insights. All of these viewpoints had their supporters, to the point where drug enforcement in general was beginning to take on the appearance of a new form of repression in the opinion of a growing number of people.

In addition, under the previous Administration a serious morale problem had developed among Federal narcotics agents, to the point where cooperation and coordination had all but disappeared.

Clearly it was time for a new beginning, and that is exactly what happened. In July 1969 President Nixon announced a 10-point program to curb drug abuse and the drug traffic.

"Society has few judgments too severe," he said, "few penalties too harsh for the men who make their livelihood in the narcotics traffic."

A new and tougher drug enforcement law was badly needed, President Nixon proposed one at that time, but it was not enacted by a Democratic-controlled Congress until nearly a year-and-a-half later. One of the features of this new law was that it drew a realistic distinction between drug pushers and drug users, with tougher punishments for the pushers and lesser penalties for their victims. In fact, marihuana possession was reduced from a felony to a misdemeanor.

To enforce this law the number of Federal agents was greatly increased. New methods were used to intercept the narcotics traffic, including the training of police dogs to sniff out heroin packages in the mail. More recently, the President created an entirely new Federal agency, the Office for Drug Abuse Law Enforcement, located in the Justice Department, to coordinate Federal efforts and to work with State and local authorities against the street pusher. He also established a National Narcotics Intelligence Office, also in the Justice Department, to serve as a clearinghouse of information to help all law enforcement

agencies in the country.

To coordinate all Federal programs for drug treatment and education, the President created a Special Action Office in the White House, and the budget for these activities was greatly increased.

To attack the foreign sources of narcotics, Richard Nixon was the first President to mobilize his foreign policy resources for this purpose. He created the Cabinet Committee on International Narcotics Control, headed by the Secretary of State, to coordinate this effort. We secured the cooperation of a special United Nations committee, and the United States put up the first funds to support its work. We obtained international agreements with France and with other countries to crack down on drug traffickers. We established with Mexico an "Operation Cooperation" to combat narcotics production and traffic. We obtained from Turkey an agreement to stop all production of opium this year. We have won the cooperation of Laos and Thailand in the so-called "Golden Triangle" region of opium production in Southeast Asia, and also of South Vietnam. And we have greatly increased the number of our own narcotics agents working with these countries around the world.

In fact, only last week we held a three-day International Narcotics Control Conference attended by representatives from 54 nations to further

the war against narcotics. At this conference, President Nixon personally reminded his listeners that under the law he was bound to withhold military and economic aid from any government that was aiding drug traffickers, and he warned, "I shall not hesitate to comply fully and promptly with that statute."

In short, the Nixon Administration has mounted the most comprehensive and determined war on narcotics ever undertaken in this country. What are the results so far?

By calendar 1971, Federal agents were removing five times more heroin and equivalent opium derivatives from the international market than had been removed in calendar 1968, the last year of the previous Administration.

In Fiscal 1972, ending last June 30th, the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs alone seized six times more heroin than in Fiscal 1969.

Federal agents made more than 16,000 narcotics arrests in Fiscal 1972, nearly double the number in Fiscal 1969.

Since it was launched in January, the Office for Drug Abuse Law Enforcement--working with State and local authorities--has initiated more than 1900 investigations, involving more than 2800 suspects. Of these,

approximately 2,000 have already been arrested.

You are perhaps aware that special Federal grand juries are sitting in Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco, hearing narcotics-related cases. Our teams to date have made 94 arrests in Los Angeles, 91 in San Diego and 111 in San Francisco.

In the stepped-up program against narcotics distributors by the Internal Revenue Service, 50 defendants have been indicted or are awaiting indictment, nearly 800 major drug traffickers are targeted for investigation, and more than 560 other traffickers are under tax action.

In the area of drug treatment, the Federal Government has funded facilities to treat more addicts in the past year than in the entire previous half century. We are now able to treat more than 100,000 heroin addicts in these Federally supported programs, and by this time next year we will be able to treat 250,000 addicts if Congress will approve our funding request.

In the rest of the world, results are equally effective.

In Turkey, which has been the principal source of raw material for heroin, the government is closing down the production of opium and we are doing everything possible to assure that illegal production

does not take its place.

The French quadrupled their seizures of heroin within one year, and for the first time have effectively smashed some of the heroin laboratories in Marseilles, which is the center of this nefarious activity.

Our "Operation Cooperation" with Mexico has destroyed much of the opium and marihuana production in that country, has broken up a number of drug trafficking rings, and has proven a model of international enforcement against drugs through mutual cooperation.

In the "Golden Triangle" countries, we have won the genuine cooperation of Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam; the heroin traffic is being vigorously attacked and we have effected the arrest of some top leaders in this despicable traffic.

The next question is, has this enormous effort inside and outside our country had any effect on keeping narcotics out of the hands of addicts and would-be addicts? For the first time in the history of American drug enforcement, we can begin to answer "yes" to that question.

Starting last November, we noticed signs of a heroin shortage on the East Coast, especially in New York City and Washington, D. C.. This could be fairly well measured by the well-known yardstick of

supply and demand. The price of heroin on the street went up and the quality or purity went down.

This shortage has gradually become more severe and has spread to other Eastern cities. We know this not only from the price/purity ratio that I just described, but also from our intelligence sources--undercover agents, informers, and from conversations between traffickers that we overhear in the court-authorized wiretaps that we have installed in certain current investigations.

By now the heroin shortage has spread from New York and Washington to include Boston, Baltimore, and Detroit. It has not yet reached California, and in fact we have information that Eastern narcotics buyers have come into this State to obtain heroin for their own markets. I can assure you that we are doing everything possible to see that the shortage spreads across this country to California, and that it becomes not just a shortage but an absolute famine.

In fact, we believe there can be a snowball effect from the limited successes that we have reported so far. By intercepting their supply routes and prosecuting their leaders, we hope to convince the organized crime syndicates to get out of the narcotics business. Since 1969 we have brought to bear on them a new weapon

enabling us to catch more racketeers and reach into their upper echelons. I refer to court-authorized wiretapping, which had been provided by Congress in 1968 for use against organized crime in such evil rackets as the drug trade. The Attorney General in the previous Administration refused to use this weapon that Congress had given him. However, the Nixon Administration believes that such a public official is duty-bound to use every lawful means at his disposal against those who make their living on the misery of others. At President Nixon's order we immediately began using court-authorized wiretapping against organized crime, and one of our first wiretaps enabled us to break up a narcotics ring in Kansas City. Since then our biggest roundups of drug rings have been made possible by wiretap evidence.

In the three years from 1969 to 1971 the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs installed 70 court-authorized wiretaps, which resulted in 362 arrests on drug trafficking charges. This is an average of more than five arrests per interception. And on the strength of this documented evidence we have been getting a high rate of convictions. If we can drive the organized syndicates out of this business, we will go a long way toward curbing the drug traffic in general.

In a more immediate snowball effect, we believe that our determined efforts and the beginnings of concrete results have brought a change in the unfavorable public attitude that I mentioned had existed in some quarters several years ago.

It is no longer possible to claim that we can't get anywhere with narcotics enforcement, and the voices in favor of legalizing heroin are not heard as frequently or as effectively. LSD has proven to be, not a mind-expander, but a mind-destroyer, and the cult of Timothy Leary has been thoroughly discredited. In fact, we recently conducted a roundup of narcotics violators remaining in this cult in California, Oregon, and Hawaii.

Further, we know that the people in the inner cities, including the youth, are adopting an attitude of active hostility against the hard drug pusher. In many places where he was once tolerated or even condoned, he is now the public enemy. In Washington, D. C., for example, parents are making active use of the "hotline" telephone number through which they tip off the police about dope peddlers.

Again, we can sense the changing attitude through the number and the zeal of young narcotics agents who are being recruited in Federal, State, and local agencies. They have seen the havoc that narcotics can wreak in their communities, and their efforts are motivated by a personal dedication to destroy this evil. There are few quarters anymore that consider drug enforcement to be a kind of repression; on the contrary, it is a very real form of liberation.

So we believe--and we are proud in believing--that a decisive beginning has been made since 1969 in an all-out war on narcotics. And in the face of this record of obvious dedication and measurable achievements, the recent statement of the Democratic candidate for the Presidency criticizing this Administration's drug enforcement efforts is simply incredible.

Certainly we would be among the first to state that the war against narcotics has not been won, and is not yet close to being won. But we have mounted an all-out offensive, and for the first time in history the enemy is on the defensive. As President Nixon recently put it, "We started on the 10-yard line and they had the ball. Now we are on the 50-yard line and we have the ball."

At the same time, all this enforcement effort by agents around the world can be undermined if the courts do not give appropriate sentences to convicted violators. We have learned of shocking cases in which hard drug traffickers are given only minimal prison terms, or simply put on probation. Last week President Nixon directed me to conduct a study of the sentences given to convicted drug traffickers. We have already begun this investigation, and in closing I would like to describe a recent case in which the courts were true to their duty.

Near the end of 1970, American and French narcotics agents began a major investigation of a plot to import approximately \$15 million worth of heroin in six automobiles. The continuing exchange of information led to the arrest of some 15 major violators in France and a number of additional leading smugglers in the United States. Evidence had been gathered by painstaking methods, and at one point we even vacuumed the floor of a garage to prove that a car containing heroin had been dismantled there. On another occasion we had to take extraordinary precautions when we discovered a plot by one of the defendants to have one of the informants murdered.

This same defendant was finally convicted last May, and in sentencing him the judge voiced the outrage and the contempt that

all of us feel toward these people who profit by the destruction of human lives. "There cannot be the slightest doubt," said the judge, "that the defendant is one of the largest distributors of narcotics in the United States with close connections with foreign suppliers.

"His illicit activities have grown from year to year, and his transactions have run into millions of dollars.

"His criminal conduct has brought untold misery to thousands upon thousands of men, women, and children and...indeed, deaths in a number of cases..."

With these words the judge sentenced this public enemy to 25 years in prison. In my opinion, that kind of sentence begins to approach the punishment this criminal deserved and the protection from such criminals that the rest of society deserves. I believe that this kind of crackdown is not cold-hearted; rather it is a most compassionate step in the protection of the public. It is not in any sense repression, but it is in fact a social crusade to preserve the physical, mental, and spiritual health of our nation.