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ADDRESS

OF

ARNOLD I. BURNS
DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL

BEFORE THE

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REMEMBER DRUGS?

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DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL ARNOLD BURNS
ADDRESS BEFORE THE
"REMEMBER DRUGS?" SYMPOSIUM

Thank you. It is indeed a pleasure to be here with you today at this important conference. But I think I can safely say that the title of this conference, "Remember Drugs?" doesn't apply to this group. Most of us are in daily contact with some facet of this drug epidemic. So rather than telling us how to "remember drugs", perhaps we should make sure that the rest of society "doesn't forget" that our battle against drug trafficking and drug abuse continues.

We are going to lick this problem. We are going to cut it back -- way back. We have the resolve and the resources to do it. All of us here at this conference see the same problem, but how do we perceive the solution to that problem? It's a matter of perspective. Now perspective is something that is not foreign to some of us working in the public sector. We sometimes are amazed at the different perspectives stemming from the same event.

There are different ways of looking at the same event. But one thing should be apparent to us all, and that simply is that we have got to step up our war on drugs. Now more than ever we need a full court press. Let me take just a few minutes here to go over some of the efforts on which the Reagan Administration is concentrating.

On the enforcement front, let's look at some of the things we've been able to accomplish.

The largest increases in funding and manpower for drug enforcement in the history of the country have occurred during the five and a half year period from 1981-1987. Federal resources devoted to drug law enforcement and demand reduction have tripled since the Reagan Administration began. The 1987 budget is 220% higher than the 1981 budget. In the Department of Justice alone drug-related funding has grown by over 238% from the Carter Administration base of \$365.5 million in 1981 to an anticipated \$1.237 billion in 1988. Despite the rhetoric you may hear to the contrary, it continues at the present time. In terms of federal law enforcement there will be \$72 million more spent in 1988 than we spent in 1987.

This investment has paid off in, among other things, some very impressive performance figures from the Drug Enforcement Administration. For example, from 1985 to 1986, asset removals by the DEA climbed from just over \$246 million to almost \$379 million, a 43.8 percent increase. In drug removals for cannabis, figures of amounts seized show an eleven percent increase from 1985 to 1986. DEA seized almost 27,000 kilograms of cocaine in 1986 -- an increase of more than 50 percent over the figures for 1985.

For total arrests, the Drug Enforcement Administration has been earning its paychecks. Total arrests for the administration jumped 19 percent in 1986. These are impressive numbers.

Yet the problem of drug abuse persists. You know, even with those arrests and seizures, a recent survey has shown that there

are about 5,000 Americans who will use cocaine for the first time today -- 5,000 people! As we in federal law enforcement are only too well aware, when a source is interdicted in one place, drugs get through somewhere else. Often when there is a crackdown on a particular drug, hardened abusers merely shift their preferences. No matter how you slice it, the "supply side" of the drug problem follows the "demand side."

As long as so many people want drugs, drugs will get through. But that is why the recent report by the President's Commission on Organized Crime stressed the need for "a concerted nationwide campaign to reduce the demand for narcotics in the United States." There is simply no alternative to a major offensive on the demand side.

We have got to change the point of view, the attitude, the mindset of the American people. The task is to persuade over 200 million Americans that they can live without -- and live much better without -- marijuana, cocaine, heroin, LSD, amphetamines, PCP and a host of other outlaw chemicals.

Make no mistake about it, we in the Justice Department will continue to enforce the drug laws with unflinching determination. We will go for the jugular of the drug supplier. We will strike hard at foreign drug sources with the cooperation of other governments. We will eradicate marijuana at home. We will interdict drug shipments destined for our markets. And we will investigate and, where appropriate, indict, prosecute, convict and incarcerate drug criminals.

But if we do all these things -- and nothing more -- we'll be in the position of the little Dutch boy running up and down the dike plugging the holes with his fingers. We may stop some leaks but we will never stem the tide.

Well, we are changing direction in the way we think about the drug problem. We are attacking on the demand side, as well as on the supply side.

Whether we succeed in the long run is going to depend upon the American people themselves. No amount of law enforcement will ever be sufficient to eliminate the scourge of drugs from our society as long as our citizens, particularly our young people, choose to use drugs. As President Reagan put it so well, "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."

But how do we find an effective and lasting way to curb demand? The answer is education. We must get out there on the front lines and bring the message home that drugs are not glamorous, not cool and not healthy.

A campaign for drug education across this nation will be required. But it must be, absolutely must be, a grassroots movement if it is to succeed.

Those in top government positions like President and Mrs. Reagan, Attorney General Meese, Secretary of Education Bennett and so many of you in this room have been providing leadership. But unless all of us and our fellow Americans decide that we're

going to carry the message into our own communities, into our homes, our schools and our places of work, then we, in Washington, might as well be herding squirrels. It's up to all of us. America can be a junkyard for junkies and potheads or a nation with the resolve to say no to drugs and yes to the American dream -- workaday Americans will decide.

Young Americans are, all in all, a pretty good group of kids. But as energetic and bright as our young people generally are, they are also impressionable and often poorly informed. Too often, they get the wrong message from their peers and their idols. By honestly portraying the reality of drug dependency, we can remove some of the luster placed on drugs and alcohol by popular culture. With all the facts in mind, I believe that young Americans will begin to take responsibility for their lives by making choices they and their country can live with. It's in their own interest. One choice that can be made is to "turn on" to productive activities; e.g., participation in community service, in sports, in church and synagogue activities, and in extracurricular school activities.

We must take these messages to America aggressively and in doing so we must tell the truth. That's right, the truth. In the past we exaggerated, we underestimated, we tip-toed around the truth, and it's really no wonder that no one believed us. You tell a kid he'll die if he smokes marijuana. So he takes a toke one day, and he doesn't die. You know what, your credibility has just been destroyed, and the kid may very well

see no harm in doing drugs no matter what else you ever tell him.

We are all under oath, not only to seek to educate the public about the dangers of drug abuse, but to educate with the truth. The medical research coming from the laboratories proves beyond a doubt that drugs are dangerous, debilitating and disabling -- disastrous. Drugs threaten the moral fabric of our society. Drugs endanger our national security.

We know these things, and it is our duty to help get the word out to the American public. We must continue to speak out about the dangers of drugs. At long last, a movement is afoot here in America. The toll drugs are taking on our individual and collective lives is no longer being ignored. Level-headed Americans in all walks of life are saying "no" to drugs -- no, we won't use drugs and no, we won't tolerate their use in our homes, our schools, our communities. A groundswell is building with parents, teachers, coaches, civic and community leaders taking the lead.

Drug abuse is all around us -- in our schools, playgrounds, hospitals, sports arenas -- you name it, and chances are that drugs are or were there. Businesses are also beginning to feel the ravages of the drug trade -- and not just at certain levels, but at all of them, from the assembly line to the boardroom.

It's hard to determine what percentage of employees abuse drugs, or which industries are the hardest hit. But we do know some of the consequences of drug abuse in the workplace. For example, did you know that:

- drug-abusing employees are three times more likely to be involved in on-the-job accidents;
- that they are absent from work twice as often;
- that they are only two thirds as productive;
- and that they consume three times as much in medical benefits.

And those are only the problems that affect the firm. As for the drug-abusing employee himself, his health is at serious risk, and he risks being fired and finding it very hard to find other work. And think of the emotional burden that he puts on his family.

We must demand excellence in all areas of our society. On the playing field -- those who claim to be heroes must accept the responsibility of the publicity and should not partake in the use of drugs. In the business world -- such scenes as the "chain gang" incident on Wall Street two weeks ago should not need to be repeated. Our message is loud and clear -- "if you use, you'll lose". And conferences like this make it possible for the message to get out.

Permit me to touch on our international efforts for a moment. Most illicit drugs used in the United States are grown and processed in foreign countries. Our international drug control strategy seeks to break the chain linking farmers in drug producing countries to users in the United States by stopping the flow of narcotics as close to the source as possible. We are actively engaged in strengthening international cooperation on

all fronts in the war against drugs. In fact, we work with our counterparts in foreign governments on a routine and frequently daily basis. We cooperate on sharing intelligence; in crop eradication and substitution programs; in joint interdiction operations, including the location and destruction of clandestine laboratories and airstrips; in investigations and prosecutions; and on the seizure of drug-related assets; and help educate the international community about the dangers of drug trafficking and abuse. To improve international drug investigations and prosecutions, we are modernizing extradition treaties and developing mutual legal assistance treaties (we call them MLATS) to provide for bilateral cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of drug crimes. For example, the Italian-American Working Group, which is co-chaired by the Attorney General, now focuses on cooperation in combatting drug trafficking as well as organized crime and terrorism. Recently our joint efforts under the Italian-American MLAT contributed to the conviction of 17 defendants in the pizza connection case in New York.

Not all our accomplishments receive publicity. For example, I want to point out that Carlos Lehder is only the most recent of seven major drug traffickers extradited to the U.S. from Columbia in the past year.

Then there are joint activities such as Operation Alliance, our current interagency and international collaboration along the southwest border, and Operation Blast Furnace, which virtually halted cocaine trafficking in Bolivia during last summer and

fall. Both can serve as models for future cooperative initiatives.

Involving interagency cooperation on an unprecedented scale, Operation Alliance entails coordination of the resources and activities of more than 20 federal law enforcement agencies and hundreds of their state and local counterparts as well as cooperation with the government of Mexico, to halt the flow of drugs across our southwest border.

Launched last August, Operation Alliance will be at full strength in 18-24 months. But, we have accomplished a great deal already.

Activities to date include the training and cross-designation of 2700 ins border patrol agents and 83 customs agents by dea, as well as the cross-designation and training of 200 border patrol agents by the Customs Service.

In the first six months of Alliance:

- ° The combined narcotics seizures by all Alliance agencies total more than 700, including over 72,700 pounds of marijuana and over 8335 pounds of cocaine.
- ° Customs has seized \$4.5 million in monetary instruments and more than \$17.5 million in contraband merchandise.
- ° ATF seizures include: 195 handguns, 325 rifles, 73 silencers, 26 machine guns, 14 destructive devices, 25,918 rounds of ammunition, and 13 pounds of other explosives.

- ° Pending forfeitures include over 100 vehicles ranging from sports cars to tractor trailers, \$66,263.00 In cash, aircraft and buildings.

And this is just the beginning -- these seizures are from just the first six months of Operation Alliance.

Furthermore, we are continuing to encourage the judicious use of drug testing to help achieve drug-free workplaces throughout the nation. Contrary to what has been emphasized in the media, drug testing programs are surviving court challenges, and the tests are effective.

On April 22, for example, the Fifth Circuit, the highest federal court to date that has ruled on the issue of drug testing for federal employees, in National Treasury Employees' Union v. vonRaab, Commissioner, reversed and vacated the nationwide injunction issued by a lower court which had halted the Custom Service's program of drug testing of applicants for sensitive positions. Under the program, any applicant for a position involving interdiction of illicit drugs, the carrying of firearms or access to classified information must submit to and pass a drug test before final selection to the position. Writing for the majority, Judge Alvin Rubin found that the Customs testing plan was reasonable under the Fourth Amendment given, and I quote, "the strong governmental interest in employing individuals for key positions in drug enforcement who themselves are not drug users and the limited intrusiveness of this particular program." The Fifth Circuit has now joined the Third, Seventh, and Eighth

Circuits in upholding fitness for duty drug testing by governmental agencies.

We must all also remember that drug usage is not a victimless crime. We see victims everywhere -- dead bodies strewn along the way from Colombia to Mexico to Chicago to Akron, children born with birth defects because their mother used drugs while pregnant, the 12 year old girl selling her body just so she can get money to buy some "crack", the vast amounts of violent crimes committed by addicts to get money to pay for more drugs. These are stories that everyone should hear and see, and only by not letting America forget about its drug problem will these stories disappear.

Well, each of us here is committed to the goal of a drug-free society. Perhaps today I did a little preaching to the choir. Well, now services are over, and it's time to put those words into action. Instead of telling America to remember drugs, we must tell ourselves not to let them forget.

Thank you.