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Secretary Shultz

Current  
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# Winning the War Against Narcotics



United States Department of State  
Bureau of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C.

*Following is an address by Secretary Shultz before a group of Bolivians and members of the press, La Paz, Bolivia, August 8, 1988.*

Your government has received me with great cordiality, grace, and dignity despite the incident [bomb explosion along the Secretary's motorcade route] this morning. I am deeply grateful to President Paz and his associates.

In recent months, I've traveled to the Soviet Union, to Western Europe, to the Middle East, to the Far East, and now to Latin America. Everywhere there is a sense of great changes underway in the world. Science and technology are transforming the materials we use and the work we do. Today we live in a global economy in which international manufacturing processes bring goods and raw materials from around the globe to the market of choice. Another fact is the global financial market—a trillion dollars change hands every day, according to some estimates.

We don't have a name yet to capture these changes, but let me suggest one: the age of information. For what connects all of these new developments is knowledge, its discovery, its transmission, and the education needed to use it. Access to ideas has thus become the key to scientific and economic progress.

Two conclusions can be drawn about the age of information.

First, a society must be open if it hopes to take advantage of new opportunities. Closed societies, isolated econ-

omies and nations will not be able to progress. There is a profound political implication here. Democracy, which is justified by humane values that go beyond economic efficiency, happens to be best suited to the new age.

Bolivia has clearly understood this, and we welcome your achievements as a democracy—not the easiest path but surely the best. Freedom, openness, individual initiative, and individual responsibility—the cornerstones of democracy—are also the building blocks of the age of information.

Second, the opportunities and the problems presented by this rapidly changing world often transcend national boundaries. No country today can expect to prosper apart from the global economy. Every country today, including the United States, needs the cooperation of allies and friends to deal with mutual dangers. And that is my subject today: how, working together, we can win the war against the new pirates of the 20th century, the narcotics traffickers of the world, who threaten us all.

Bolivia and the United States are two of the many allies in this war. As democracies, we understand the dangers of failing to fight such a ruthless and pervasive enemy. And as the largest single market for illegal drugs, the United States has a special responsibility in this struggle—a very special responsibility.

So let us hold a council of war. What are we doing about drugs, as individual countries? What are we doing together? And what more can we do?

## U.S. Efforts To Reduce Consumption

Many here and elsewhere continue to ask: "Is the United States really doing enough to reduce the vast American demand for drugs at the heart of this trade?" The answer is, we are doing a lot but not enough—not yet. But the answer also is that we are beginning to do what needs to be done—at last.

Americans are slow to anger, but once aroused, we know how to take action. Today Americans are sickened by the sight of young athletes, who should be heroes, throwing their lives away through drug abuse; by children, whose aspirations are perverted to a life of crime; by auto and train accidents, injuring or killing the innocent, because of drug abuse; by evidence of drug use by those entrusted with our health, our safety, and our security; by the international drug cartels that make the Capone crowd and the old Mafia look like small-time crooks.

Americans have finally begun to say "no" to drugs. Drug-taking is now seen increasingly for what it is: death, not life. A crucial psychological change has taken place, especially among young Americans. In the past 8 years, we have seen dramatic reductions in teenage marijuana abuse: today one in 30 students report using marijuana on a

daily basis, compared to one in nine 10 years ago. Cocaine use among young people has also declined, dropping by one-third last year. American students are saying "no" to drugs and "yes" to their future.

President and Mrs. Reagan have led the American fight against drug abuse. There are now more than 9,000 groups of parents working in communities, sharing information and tactics. Mrs. Reagan's "Just Say No" clubs are influencing a new generation of American children. Drug education and prevention efforts have become common in our schools, from kindergarten on up.

Everybody has a job to do—the churches, the workplaces, the government, coaches and athletes. Everywhere the word has to go out: "Don't take drugs, and if you do, we are going to be tough as nails." It is not a matter of choice, and it's no longer a careless attitude of "live and let live." No quantity of drugs, even small amounts once considered "personal possession" levels, will be tolerated—zero tolerance. Vehicles and yachts are being seized, offenders are being fined, and our enforcement agencies are sending a loud message—no one is above the law.

We are saying to lawyers, to stockbrokers, to doctors: by choosing to use drugs, you are throwing it all away—your possessions, your standing in the community, your freedom. Personal responsibility can no longer be denied.

Our law enforcement agencies and courts are arresting and convicting more drug offenders than ever before. Over 12,000 people arrested by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration were convicted of drug crimes last year, roughly twice the number in 1981. In New York City alone, felony drug convictions during the last 4 years more than tripled, from 4,202 to 13,466.

Over the last 10 years, the U.S. Coast Guard has arrested more than 8,500 drug smugglers. In 1983, we formed the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System, led by Vice President Bush, to coordinate Federal, State, and local law enforcement efforts against drug smuggling nationwide. Since the formation of the border interdiction system, annual cocaine seizures have gone up twentyfold.

The Comprehensive Crime Control Act, passed in 1984, helps us put drug dealers out of business by seizing their assets. Last year, over \$500 million in drug-related assets were seized in the United States. Since 1981, we have tri-

pled the antidrug enforcement budget, and President Reagan has asked for another 13% increase. That would give the U.S. Government \$3.9 billion next fiscal year to fight the drug menace.

Our Congress continues its crusade to eliminate drugs from America. The omnibus drug bill now being considered reflects the recent, important changes we have seen in American attitudes. Through the new legislation, Congress is proposing that more treatment be made available to users who seek it but is insisting at the same time that those who refuse to be treated will be in trouble with the law. Proposals have been made to rescind drivers licenses of young people who are discovered using drugs and to withhold Federal privileges, such as student loans.

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Strong new penalties against those who deal in illegal drugs—the peddlers of evil—are being developed. Local and Federal law enforcement agencies are being given increased resources and more legal tools with which to fight an already well-equipped enemy. Across the board, Congress and the Executive are proposing a number of measures to augment the order of battle at home and to help our allies abroad.

Anyone who doubts that the American people are serious about eliminating drug abuse ought to take a good look at any opinion poll, any newspaper, and every political speech. Drug abuse is the number one election issue. And the drug trade is the number one enemy.

So that is the news from the north. We are mobilizing fully to wage this war at home; to cut demand. We are going to win.

### Challenges Facing South America

Let me turn now to the situation on this continent—what you face, what you are doing, and how we can help.

Physicians and scientists tell us that drug addiction does not usually result from massive doses but from small amounts. The addict believes that he or she can stop "at any time." Soon it is too late. The poison attacks the brain

and the body, and the victim soon loses health, will, and personality.

Similar things can happen to a country. The cultivation of the coca plants or of marijuana for illicit purposes starts small, in isolated places. People say, "It's always been grown here, and it is being used in dangerous ways elsewhere, so how can it harm us?" There is good money in it, and the drug dealers like to behave like Robin Hoods. They buy allies.

The economy of narcotics prospers, and soon a country's political institutions are undermined. Its constitution becomes a scrap of paper, while the guardians of its independence are corrupted—whether they be soldiers or civilians. And everything goes, including self-respect and sovereignty.

Ultimately, drugs destroy the moral fabric of society. That is why drugs and democracy are permanent enemies. Democratic thinkers from Thomas Jefferson to Victor Paz Estenssoro have taught that democracy rests upon certain ethical foundations. Ultimately, self-government in the political sense depends on self-government in the personal and moral sense. There can be no compromises here. A person must say "no" to drug abuse or eventually he will say "no" to life. A nation must say "no" to narcotics or eventually it will say "no" to democracy.

And what could be more destructive to a nation than a systematic attack on its natural resources? Look at Peru. Experts agree that—unless coca cultivation and cocaine processing are stopped soon—the Upper Huallaga Valley could be reduced to a toxic waste dump. Slash-and-burn agriculture is eroding the soil. Hired coca farmers are carelessly using chemicals and fertilizers. Processors have dumped millions of liters of kerosene, sulfuric acid, acetone, and toluene into the valley's rivers and ground water. When the sun hits the Huallaga River at just the right angle, the chemical pollution—a yellow color—can be seen from the air. That's the color of a dying land.

### Recent Developments in Bolivia and Colombia

So, the challenges are clear. What is being done in the region about it? I will comment on developments in several countries, but concentrate on two that are very different—Bolivia and Colombia.

**Bolivia.** Here in Bolivia, despite strong opposition, your Congress has passed a comprehensive antinarcotics

law. You have kept your national pledge to the world community to outlaw all coca cultivation beyond that raised in specific areas, in certain quantities, for traditional uses. You have defined the crimes of illicit narcotics production, processing, and trafficking and specified the penalties for breaking the law. You have voluntarily eradicated over 2,000 hectares of coca over the past year—fulfilling the letter of your international commitments. You have captured and jailed Roberto Suarez, a leader among the international drug criminals.

All of this has been difficult. The pirates and warlords of the drug business have fought you at every step, with money, intimidation, and violence. But there can be no question that Bolivia has made the right choice. We salute you for that choice.

We have made the same choice. This morning's explosion brings that home. There is no turning back. The traffickers want us to look the other way. The terrorists want us to run and hide. To both I say: "You have picked on the wrong people. The democracies will not be intimidated. Bolivia and the United States will stand together. We will win this war."

When the history of the war against narcotics is written, Bolivia will rank high. Millions who are young, still more millions not yet born will owe you a priceless debt of gratitude.

There are many lessons to be learned from the Bolivian experience. Perhaps the most important is that a country's own strength to act against the drug menace can be multiplied many times more through international cooperation. A number of countries—including, very much, the United States through the State Department's International Narcotics Control Program and using development and other economic assistance funds—have pledged the monies necessary to support the unique Bolivian combination of economic incentive and law enforcement. And your own legislative decisions have mandated that the "Bolivian way" must be made a reality.

The U.S. Congress has looked at your law and your performance with great interest, and I trust that your steady commitment will convince the members of our legislative body of your serious intentions. To sum up, the drug traffickers are in trouble in Bolivia.

**Colombia.** In Colombia, the country is under siege. Narcotics traffickers and guerrillas, often operating together

in criminal conspiracy, threaten Colombian democracy. The Medellin cartel, as evil a bunch as exists anywhere, has murdered many officials and citizens whose sin it was to stand up for the rule of law, the honor of Colombia, democracy, and just plain human decency. They are in cahoots with other evildoers. The FARC [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia] guerrillas protect the traffickers in some areas and produce their own drugs in others. Then there is the M-19, a new "Murder Incorporated," hired by the drug cartels to kill those who oppose them, as we saw in the attack on the Palace of Justice 3 years ago.

The Government of Colombia is fighting back. The Colombian military—in its largest and most successful operation to date in the country's drug interdiction history—recently seized over 3,000 kilos of cocaine, a cache of sophisticated weapons, and large amounts of the chemicals used to manufacture the drug. Air force and army units combined to force down two trafficker planes at a clandestine airfield, where the cocaine was seized. This is only the latest example. To date in 1988, Colombian military and law enforcement units have seized 15 tons of cocaine hydrochloride (HCL) or equivalent; 680 cocaine HCL labs have been destroyed, compared to 183 for the same period in 1987.

We in the United States cannot and will not stand aside from this battle. We are going to help give Colombia the tools it needs to win this war. The U.S. Congress is considering passage of legislation to permit the Export-Import Bank to guarantee financing of loans to governments like that of Colombia for the purchase of weapons and other military equipment to use in the war on the traffickers.

### Progress in Other Countries

What about other countries in the region? After a rough start, we are seeing some progress.

**Peru.** As producer of half the world's coca leaf, Peru has long been aware of the dangers posed by drug trafficking to its democracy and its physical environment. President Garcia began his presidency determined to stamp out this vile trade. His government has now pledged a program of large-scale eradication of coca, including the use of herbicides, once a safe and effective product is identified and fully tested. A small army has been mobilized in the remote Upper Huallaga Valley to fight the traffickers.

The United States provides financial and logistical aid, but it is the Peruvian *Guardia Civil* that is fighting the battles and taking the casualties in the struggle to defend Peru's institutions. The drug merchants and terrorists have joined in a deadly marriage of convenience whose only common ground is contempt for democracy and humanity.

**Ecuador.** Ecuador today is totally free of coca cultivation because of a determined governmental effort supported by the United States to destroy the crop. But trafficking in illicit drugs and precursor chemicals is up and has contributed to a substantial rise in local drug addiction.

**Other Governments.** As this suggests, the problem is changing all the time. The Venezuelan Government has had to move against increasing trafficker use of its territory. Brazil's vast border regions have been an inviting lure to cultivation for trafficking. Argentina has become a major locus of cocaine movement to Europe and the United States. But all three governments are now alert to the problem and are taking action against the traffickers. Last month, Argentine authorities were able to seize 1,200 pounds of cocaine and disrupt a major drug network.

Unfortunately, no country in the Western Hemisphere, including my own, has yet been able to control adequately the movement of coca, or paste, or cocaine, or the precursor chemicals which make it all possible. That's a sad but accurate conclusion. We are all fighting this war, and we have made some headway. Yet the fact is that despite the money spent, the laws passed, and the lives lost, there is more cocaine entering the United States and Europe from South America than ever before. We have failed to stop the enemy. We are responsible because the demand for drugs still exists, and *you* are responsible because the drugs are still being produced and shipped northward.

As the U.S. National Drug Policy Board recently reported, the pool of people using drugs has diminished, but the pool's drug consumption has risen. Clearly, though we are allies, we have not helped each other enough. And that's the key to it—to increase our ability to act and our will to act through international cooperation. This is an international problem, and we must deal with it on an international basis if we want to succeed.

## Future Efforts

Where do we go from here? Let me suggest some directions.

**First**, do not give up the fight. That's what it would mean if we legalized narcotics. We do not want a nation of addicts. Neither do you. And you don't want to make the drug syndicates even more powerful in your countries.

**Second**, mobilize more of our resources, our key institutions: the military, as in Colombia; the legislators, as in Bolivia; the media and the private sector, as in the United States; the schools, the churches, the workplaces, the home.

**Third**, expand international cooperation among the nations cursed by the drug trade. The Toronto economic summit in June called for more cooperation against "all facets" of the drug trade, particularly production, trafficking, and financing. The summit also supported the adoption of a UN convention on illicit trafficking. This convention is a Latin American initiative, and it is Latin American leadership that has brought rapid progress toward its completion in Vienna in November.

Great changes have already been taking place in this hemisphere, once known for its nationalistic border disputes. Direct law enforcement cooperation is becoming the norm—as among Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru; the Andean nations together in their regional antidrug communications network; and the specific agreements that Brazil has concluded with its neighbors. We all recognize the fact that the problem is greater than any individual country, including the United States.

Six weeks ago in Washington, a precedent-setting meeting of the leaders of the Andean Parliament and of our own Congress produced a joint declaration symbolic of this sense of regional responsibility and commitment.

The declaration recognized "the menace that organized narco-trafficking represents for the security and the continuation of democracy..." It insisted on the setting of specific goals for the complete elimination of both consumption and production of narcotics. It called for concrete measures to combat drug money laundering. And it asked for the development of "an international strategy and inter-American mechanisms of cooperation in the fight against the illegal production, traffic, and use of drugs."

Our Congress—from Chairman [of the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control] Rangel to Congressman Gilman to Senators D'Amato, Kerry, Murkowski, and DeConcini, all of whom contributed to that meeting of legislative leaders—championed those goals. [Bolivian] Vice President Garrett was there with his Andean colleagues and can take pride in his role in that effort. And we—the State Department, Justice, Treasury, and Defense—will do our part, specifically:

- We must continue to refine and expand the State Department's International Narcotics Control Program, now contributing some \$100 million a year worldwide (almost half of that in South America) to law enforcement and other antidrug efforts.

- We must expand our military assistance programs to those countries where the direct cooperation of the defense establishment with civilian agencies is essential if the war against the traffickers and their allies is to be won.

- We must revise our own laws and procedures which have made it difficult to provide useful assistance to foreign military or police forces. That means doing something about security assistance prohibitions imposed in the 1960s out of fear that such assistance might strengthen dictatorships. How tragic it is that these laws now hamper our help for democracies so urgently

in need. Limitations on what kind of credit and guarantees our Export-Import Bank can provide are also part of the problem. We hope that the omnibus drug bill now moving through the Congress will address these issues.

- We must continue to remember that coca eradication has economic ramifications. With the Europeans and others, we should continue to provide assistance to help countries make the transition to a legal economy.

Let me sum it up. We in the United States are ready to help, and we all need to help each other. We may be looking at the turning point in this war: at a United States aroused at last to discourage consumption, reduce demand, punish the users and the suppliers; at a United States generous and understanding of its allies in this struggle; at allies who, like Bolivia, aim at the total elimination of the illicit crop within a reasonable period of time; at the determined and rapid destruction of the laboratories, of the aircraft and landing fields; at the arrest, trial, conviction, and jailing of the so-called kingpins; at the seizure of the traffickers' assets; at the new hemisphere-wide conviction that a free people, in democratic consultation, can beat its most powerful enemies; in short, at the supremacy of law, the assertion of sovereignty, and the safeguarding of our peoples' health and honor, dignity, and security.

The war against narcotics can and must be won. ■

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