

Excerpts from Remarks of

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Four weeks ago, after the Convention at Miami Beach, I came out to Mission Bay to rest and to work. When I was there, a letter was delivered to me from a 19-year-old girl. She described to me her involvement with narcotics from the time she was sixteen years old; she told me how many of her teen-age friends had also become hooked on drugs; she gave the details of the horrible life they led, and the gruesome things they did to support their habit. She asked me what I could do to help her generation; and because she was still on drugs she never signed her name.

This was not some statistic that sent me this letter; it was a human being, someone's daughter -- and in a letter like this the evil of narcotics comes through a good deal clearer than it does from reading statistics or a local newspaper.

I don't have to tell you this story. Many of you are aware of the wholesale destruction of lives within your own area. Six months ago, in Fullerton, California 55 to 65 youngsters, half of them in high school, were arrested for selling narcotics. In Palos Verdes, just last June, a local high school student, the son of a good family, walked off a cliff to his death -- after he had taken LSD.

Let us begin to face facts -- and to act upon that knowledge. Narcotics are the modern curse of American youth; just like the plagues and epidemics of former years, these drugs are decimating a generation of Americans.

Between 1960 and 1967 narcotics arrests in this country rose 15 times as rapidly as the population. In New York City, half of the crime is committed by addicts, most of them young -- and the major cause of death for those between 15 and 35 is heroin addiction.

That young girl asked me in her letter what I can do to help this generation.

Let me tell you what I intend to do.

First, we must move against the source of those drugs. In doing so we must seek out the cooperation and assistance of friendly nations, which have been made conduits for drugs. Ninety-five percent of the heroin and 100 percent of the marijuana that goes into the hands of the youngsters of Southern California comes from outside the United States. We must work to establish multi-national commissions with neighboring and other countries to stem the flow of drugs along our common borders and at other points of entry into the United States.

Second, let us recognize that the frontiers of the United States are the primary responsibility of the United States Bureau of Customs. I recommend that we triple the number of Customs Agents in this country from 331 to 1000. This is not any irresponsible recommendation; it was urged upon this country by the President's own Crime Commission, and as President of the United States in January of 1969 I will follow through with that recommendation.

Third, a new Administration will accelerate the development of tools and weapons to detect narcotics in transit. It will undertake a long-overdue review of the smuggling laws of the United States.

Fourth, we need to assist the youngsters who have fallen prey to this disease. The Narcotics Addict Rehabilitation Act of 1966 has not been implemented as it might have been, or as it should have been.

Only some 305 addicts have been treated -- out of a national total of at least 60,000 -- in the two years since the legislation was passed.

Finally, as President, I will instruct the Attorney General to call a national convocation of law enforcement officials -- in the first days of a new Administration -- to discuss ways and means to curb this traffic which is the scourge of American youth.

My opponent has disagreed with me on this issue of crime. He has said that the President and Vice President and the Attorney General are not responsible for the breakdown in law because they "don't break the laws." He has said we should have a moratorium on rhetoric about law and order.

My answer is this: We don't need an attitude of complacency and self-congratulation on the issue of crime at the national level. We need a new urgency and we need action on the part of this nation's highest officials -- that is what this crisis calls for and that is what I pledge the day after we take office in January.

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NOTE: Since Mr. Nixon will be speaking without text this evening, there may be additions or changes in these excerpts as delivered, but he stands by them as stated above.