

## Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

## TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

Within the last decade, the abuse of drugs has grown from essentially a local police problem into a serious national threat to the personal health and safety of millions of Americans.

A national awareness of the gravity of the situation is needed; a new urgency and concerted national policy are needed at the Federal level to begin to cope with this growing menace to the general welfare of the United States.

Between the years 1960 and 1967, juvenile arrests involving the use of drugs rose by almost 800 percent; half of those now being arrested for the illicit use of narcotics are under 21 years of age. New York City alone has records of some 40,000 heroin addicts, and the number rises between 7000 and 9000 a year. These official statistics are only the tip of an iceberg whose dimensions we can only surmise.

The number of narcotics addicts across the United States is now estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands. Another estimate is that several million American college students have at least experimented with marihuana, hashish, LSD, amphetamines, or barbiturates. It is doubtful that an American parent can send a son or daughter to college today without exposing the young man or woman to drug abuse. Parents must also be concerned about the availability and use of such drugs in our high schools and junior high schools.

The habit of the narcotics addict is not only a danger to himself, but a threat to the community where he lives. Narcotics have been cited as a primary cause of the enormous increase in street crimes over the last decade.

As the addict's tolerance for drugs increases, his demand for drugs rises, and the cost of his habit grows. It can easily reach hundreds of dollars a day. Since an underworld "fence" will give him only a fraction of the value of goods he steals, an addict can be forced to commit two or three burglaries a day to maintain his habit. Street robberies, prostitution, even the enticing of others into addiction to drugs -- an addict will reduce himself to any offense, any degradation in order to acquire the drugs he craves.

However far the addict himself may fall, his offenses against himself and society do not compare with the inhumanity of those who make a living exploiting the weakness and desperation of their fellow men. Society has few judgments too severe, few penalties too harsh for the men who make their livelihood in the narcotics traffic.

It has been a common oversimplification to consider narcotics addiction, or drug abuse, to be a law enforcement problem alone. Effective control of illicit drugs requires the cooperation of many agencies of the Federal and local and State governments; it is beyond the province of any one of them alone. At the Federal level, the burden of the national effort must be carried by the Departments of Justice, Health, Education, and Welfare, and the Treasury. I am proposing ten specific steps as this Administration's initial counter-moves against this growing national problem.

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## I. FEDERAL LEGISLATION

To more effectively meet the narcotic and dangerous drug problems at the Federal level, the Attorney General is forwarding to the Congress a comprehensive legislative proposal to control these drugs. This measure will place in a single statute, a revised and modern plan for control. Current laws in this field are inadequate and outdated.

I consider the legislative proposal a fair, rational and necessary approach to the total drug problem. It will tighten the regulatory controls and protect the public against illicit diversion of many of these drugs from legitimate channels. It will insure greater accountability and better recordkeeping. It will give law enforcement stronger and better tools that are sorely needed so that those charged with enforcing these laws can do so more effectively. Further, this proposal creates a more flexible mechanism which will allow quicker control of new dangerous drugs before their misuse and abuse reach epidemic proportions. I urge the Congress to take favorable action on this bill.

In mid-May the Supreme Court struck down segments of the marihuana laws and called into question some of the basic foundations for the other existing drug statutes. I have also asked the Attorney General to submit an interim measure to correct the constitutional deficiencies of the Marihuana Tax Act as pointed out in the Supreme Court's recent decision. I urge Congress to act swiftly and favorably on the proposal to close the gap now existing in the Federal law and thereby give the Congress time to carefully examine the comprehensive drug control proposal.

## II. STATE LEGISLATION

The Department of Justice is developing a model State Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Act. This model law will be made available to the fifty State governments. This legislation is designed to improve State laws in dealing with this serious problem and to complement the comprehensive drug legislation being proposed to Congress at the national level. Together these proposals will provide an interlocking trellis of laws which will enable government at all levels to more effectively control the problem.

## III. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Most of the illicit narcotics and high-potency marihuana consumed in the United States is produced abroad and clandestinely imported. I have directed the Secretary of State and the Attorney General to explore new avenues of cooperation with foreign governments to stop the production of this contraband at its sources. The United States will cooperate with foreign governments working to eradicate the production of illicit drugs within their own frontiers. I have further authorized these Cabinet officers to formulate plans that will lead to meetings at the law enforcement level between the United States and foreign countries now involved in the drug traffic either as originators or avenues of transit.

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#### IV. SUPPRESSION OF ILLEGAL IMPORTATION

Our efforts to eliminate these drugs at their point of origin will be coupled with new efforts to intercept them at their point of illegal entry into the United States. The Department of the Treasury, through the Bureau of Customs, is charged with enforcing the nation's smuggling laws. I have directed the Secretary of the Treasury to initiate a major new effort to guard the nation's borders and ports against the growing volume of narcotics from abroad. There is a recognized need for more men and facilities in the Bureau of Customs to carry out this directive. At my request, the Secretary of the Treasury has submitted a substantial program for increased manpower and facilities in the Bureau of Customs for this purpose which is under intensive review.

In the early days of this Administration, I requested that the Attorney General form an inter-departmental Task Force to conduct a comprehensive study of the problem of unlawful trafficking in narcotics and dangerous drugs. One purpose of the Task Force has been to examine the existing programs of law enforcement agencies concerned with the problem in an effort to improve their coordination and efficiency. I now want to report that this Task Force has completed its study and has a recommended plan of action, for immediate and long-term implementation, designed to substantially reduce the illicit trafficking in narcotics, marihuana and dangerous drugs across United States borders. To implement the recommended plan, I have directed the Attorney General to organize and place into immediate operation an "action task force" to undertake a frontal attack on the problem. There are high profits in the illicit market for those who smuggle narcotics and drugs into the United States; we intend to raise the risks and cost of engaging in this wretched traffic.

#### V. SUPPRESSION OF NATIONAL TRAFFICKING

Successful prosecution of an increased national effort against illicit drug trafficking will require not only new resources and men, but also a redeployment of existing personnel within the Department of Justice.

I have directed the Attorney General to create, within the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, a number of special investigative units. These special forces will have the capacity to move quickly into any area in which intelligence indicates major criminal enterprises are engaged in the narcotics traffic. To carry out this directive, there will be a need for additional manpower within the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. The budgetary request for FY 1970 now pending before the Congress will initiate this program. Additional funds will be requested in FY 1971 to fully deploy the necessary special investigative units.

#### VI. EDUCATION

Proper evaluation and solution of the drug problem in this country has been severely handicapped by a dearth of scientific information on the subject -- and the prevalence of ignorance and misinformation. Different "experts" deliver solemn judgments which are poles apart. As a result of these conflicting judgments, Americans seem to have divided themselves on the issue, along generational lines.

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There are reasons for this lack of knowledge. First, widespread drug use is a comparatively recent phenomenon in the United States. Second, it frequently involves chemical formulations which are novel or age-old drugs little used in this country until very recently. The volume of definitive medical data remains small -- and what exists has not been broadly disseminated. This vacuum of knowledge -- as was predictable -- has been filled by rumors and rash judgments, often formed with a minimal experience with a particular drug, sometimes formed with no experience or knowledge at all.

The possible danger to the health or well-being of even a casual user of drugs is too serious to allow ignorance to prevail or for this information gap to remain open. The American people need to know what dangers and what risks are inherent in the use of the various kinds of drugs readily available in illegal markets today. I have therefore directed the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, assisted by the Attorney General through the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, to gather all authoritative information on the subject and to compile a balanced and objective educational program to bring the facts to every American -- especially our young people.

With this information in hand, the overwhelming majority of students and young people can be trusted to make a prudent judgment as to their personal course of conduct.

## VII. RESEARCH

In addition to gathering existing data, it is essential that we acquire new knowledge in the field. We must know more about both the short and long-range effects of the use of drugs being taken in such quantities by so many of our people. We need more study as well to find the key to releasing men from the bonds of dependency forged by any continued drug abuse.

The National Institute of Mental Health has primary responsibility in this area, and I am further directing the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to expand existing efforts to acquire new knowledge and a broader understanding in this entire area.

## VIII. REHABILITATION

Considering the risks involved, including those of arrest and prosecution, the casual experimenter with drugs of any kind, must be considered at the very least, rash and foolish. But the psychologically dependent regular users and the physically addicted are genuinely sick people. While this sickness cannot excuse the crimes they commit, it does help to explain them. Society has an obligation both to itself and to these people to help them break the chains of their dependency.

Currently, a number of federal, state and private programs of rehabilitation are being operated. These programs utilize separately and together, psychiatry, psychology and "substitute drug" therapy. At this time, however, we are without adequate data to evaluate their full benefit. We need more experience with them and more knowledge. Therefore, I am directing the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to provide every assistance to those pioneering in the field, and to sponsor and conduct research on the Federal level. This Department will act as a clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of drug abuse data and experience in the area of rehabilitation.

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I have further instructed the Attorney General to insure that all Federal prisoners, who have been identified as dependent upon drugs, be afforded the most up-to-date treatment available.

#### IX. TRAINING PROGRAM

The enforcement of narcotics laws requires considerable expertise, and hence considerable training. The Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs provides the bulk of this training in the Federal government. Its programs are extended to include not only its own personnel, but State and local police officers, forensic chemists, foreign nationals, college deans, campus security officers, and members of industry engaged in the legal distribution of drugs.

Last year special training in the field of narcotics and dangerous drug enforcement was provided for 2700 State and local law enforcement officials. In fiscal year 1969 we expanded the program an estimated 300 percent in order to train some 11,000 persons. During the current fiscal year we plan to redouble again that effort -- to provide training to 22,000 State and local officers. The training of these experts must keep pace with the rise in the abuse of drugs, if we are ever to control it.

#### X. LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCES

The Attorney General intends to begin a series of conferences with law enforcement executives from the various States and concerned Federal officials. The purposes of these conferences will be several: first, to obtain firsthand information, more accurate data, on the scope of the drug problem at that level; second, to discuss the specific areas where Federal assistance and aid can best be most useful; third, to exchange ideas and evaluate mutual policies. The end result we hope will be a more coordinated effort that will bring us visible progress for the first time in an alarming decade.

These then are the first ten steps in the national effort against narcotic marihuana and other dangerous drug abuse. Many steps are already underway. Many will depend upon the support of the Congress. I am asking, with this message, that you act swiftly and favorably on the legislative proposals that will soon be forthcoming, along with the budgetary requests required if our efforts are to be successful. I am confident that Congress shares with me the grave concern over this critical problem, and that Congress will do all that is necessary to mount and continue a new and effective federal program aimed at eradicating this rising sickness in our land.

RICHARD NIXON

THE WHITE HOUSE,

July 14, 1969.

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