

Shepard/Krogh

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PRESIDENTIAL
TV ADDRESS ON THE WAR AGAINST DRUG ABUSE

My fellow Americans:

I want to discuss this evening a subject of deep personal concern to me and to every American family: the continuing problem of drug abuse.

Last year 1,259 Americans died from heroin overdose in New York City alone. Heroin was the largest single cause of death for citizens in New York between the ages of 15 and 35. We now estimate that perhaps half a million Americans -- many of them still teenagers -- are heroin users. These young men and women -- in the beginning of their lives -- are in the process of destroying themselves for a daily "fix."

Despite our best past efforts, we estimate that every three months enough heroin can be smuggled into the United States to provide four "fixes" for every American between the ages of 15 and 25. That is 150 million shots of heroin.

Each year inside our country, addicts spend an estimated \$6 billion for their heroin. That is a daily heroin take of almost \$17 million, most of which must come from criminal activities by addicts. Some addicts have to spend over \$100 each day to support their habit.

I repeat these grim statistics only to emphasize the magnitude of this national tragedy. We as a nation are suffering from a heroin problem of unprecedented proportions.

On my recent journey to the Peoples' Republic of China I learned that, in their bill of complaints against the West, the Chinese rate the introduction of opium into their country by 19th century European traders as the worst offense of all.

Consequently, the Chinese have some of the toughest control measures in the world against both the cultivation and use of hard narcotics, including heroin.

Developments in our own country during the 1960s -- when our government napped -- when drugs were falsely endowed with some sheen of glamour -- when narcotics became confused with social protest -- when people without consciences organized efficient distribution systems -- these trends have made heroin everybody's problem.

Location, income, race, sex, education, career, family background are irrelevant. No such factor provides a safeguard. Heroin today is everybody's enemy.

The time to act is now.

During the past year, I have laid the groundwork for a comprehensive drug abuse control program with four balanced, simultaneous attacks:

-- Internationally, I have directed the use of all possible diplomatic pressure to end the production and trafficking of dangerous drugs all over the world, and to close our borders to drug smugglers.

-- Domestically, we are stepping up our enforcement attacks on drug trafficking: we now have the needed legislation and greatly expanded Federal manpower to end major distribution systems. We are also now prepared to engage in a Federal assault on street-level heroin pushers.

We are also giving equal emphasis to two other vital needs:

-- Public educational programs, in which to seek to prevent drug abuse from spreading to new victims, particularly young people not fully aware of the hazards involved, and

-- Rehabilitation of drug abusers, through increased treatment facilities and the development of new techniques through high-priority medical research.

One measure of the Federal Government's commitment is the additional money we are spending. This year, we are spending more than seven times as much for treatment, rehabilitation, research, education, training and prevention than was being spent three years ago. In the same period, Federal expenditures for drug law enforcement

have increased more than eight fold. In the coming fiscal year, I have asked Congress to appropriate over \$600 million to combat the drug problem.

Our new efforts are beginning to pay off: Internationally, Turkey has banned growing of the opium poppy, France has closed down two operating heroin labs and made history's largest heroin seizure -- 937 pounds aboard a shrimp boat in Marseilles harbor. I have directed American Ambassadors in embassies around the world to formulate and implement detailed narcotics control action plans with the foreign governments to which they are assigned.

We seized \$100 million worth of heroin at our own borders in 1971 -- an increase of 160 percent.

At home, the number of drug-related arrests has nearly doubled. We hope to seize four times as much heroin this year as we did in 1969. The Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, the Bureau of Customs, and special agents from the Internal Revenue Service are working to target, penetrate and immobilize major trafficking organizations. The newly established Office of Drug Abuse Law Enforcement is bringing Federal manpower, money and impact to bear on street-level heroin pushers. Finally we have established the Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention, to coordinate and expand Federal education, treatment, rehabilitation and prevention programs.

Still we can do more.

I will shortly propose to the Congress new legislation requiring minimum mandatory jail terms of five years for non-addict heroin pushers.

It is my strong personal conviction that the selling of heroin, particularly by cynical persons who are not addicted themselves, is one of the most reprehensible crimes that it is possible to commit. Nothing is more abhorrent than deliberately enslaving other human beings -- young people who are desperately sick or young people who are innocent, first-time victims, to a life of degradation, crime and misery.

The punishment for these pushers should be strict and it should be certain.

I have directed that special teams of investigators be dispatched to 33 cities across the Nation to begin combing those cities for known heroin pushers. Suspects will be brought before Special Grand Juries empanelled to unravel the intricate details of local heroin distribution systems.

I am pleased to be able to announce that 2 of these Grand Juries are now operating in New York City and one in Washington, D. C., 30 more will be established in cities across the United States in the next three months.

To improve our drug intelligence collection efforts overseas, I have informed Director Helms of the CIA that his organization is to place a high priority on discovering and disrupting major drug trafficking syndicates overseas.

I am also establishing by Executive Order a new National Narcotics Intelligence Center reporting to the Attorney General. This Center will be the nerve center for the Federal government's world-wide battle against the drug traffic.

These initiatives will enable us to mobilize the full resources of the United States government against those trafficking in human misery and death.

Our targets will include traffickers of all types, whether they be feudal warlords with their private armies in the Shan State of Burma; Mafia gangsters running clandestine heroin labs in Marseilles; couriers with phoney diplomatic passports at Kennedy Airport in New York; or the local tough who pushes heroin on street corners in major cities across the country.

In addition to cracking down hard on traffickers, there must be another, more compassionate aspect to our war on drug abuse. Heroin addicts are confused, and sick -- much like chronic alcoholics. Once addicted, theirs is a medical problem -- and should be treated as such with as much skill and understanding as our society can muster.

Present treatment programs are inadequate. Long waiting lists for public drug abuse clinics exist in New York City and a number of other metropolitan centers. This situation is intolerable. A heroin addict's life expectancy is short. Everyday he remains on the street he poses a serious danger both to himself and to the innocent citizens who are the victims of his crime.

Congress passed -- unanimously -- in Mid-March a law setting up and funding my Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention. With the money provided by this law, enough new facilities will be set up to eliminate waiting lists by the end of this year. Thus, by Christmas, we will be able to treat every addict who desires to kick his habit.

To provide a strong incentive for those addicts who lack the motivation necessary to sign up voluntarily, I will soon submit to the Congress legislation directing the courts to make membership in a bona fide treatment program a condition of bail or parole in narcotics cases. With the passage of this legislation, heroin addicts accused or convicted of criminal offenses will be released into treatment programs, not simply placed back on the street.

In addition to these direct actions by the Federal government, I place heavy reliance on public education and community action. We therefore established the National Clearinghouse for Drug Abuse

Information, which has distributed more than 25 million pieces of drug information materials.

-- We have provided drug education training to 350,000 teachers, students and community leaders.

-- We have held conferences at the White House for the Nation's governors and for various professions, to enlist their organized support for our anti-narcotics programs.

Public education and community action is one phase of the drug fight that every citizen and every organization can and should join. I know that many dedicated organizations already have launched informed programs, and that millions of individuals have started educating themselves and their families about drugs -- today, I urge every organization and every individual to join up.

-- First, write to the National Clearinghouse for Drug Abuse Information at Washington, D. C., for accurate information on drugs and their dangers. Make sure you and your family know the facts. Emotional appeals, particularly if factually in error, can be self-defeating.

-- Then, again proceeding on a strictly factual basis, work to get all your organizations, and all schools in your area, to take up the

drug education campaign. Work to get knowledgeable speakers to talk to the young people in your home communities -- and carry the word yourself at every opportunity.

-- Support local drug enforcement efforts. Rally public support against local places which seem to encourage the drug traffic, or at least permit it to continue.

-- Use the Heroin Hotline, a nation-wide, toll-free telephone number which I have established for use by any citizen to report directly to federal authorities on suspected heroin pushers.

The number is 800- . The Hotline is manned 24 hours a day.

Abraham Lincoln once declared, and it could serve as my text for tonight, that

"Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed. "

I assure you tonight that nothing can continue to exist in America if its Government and its citizens do not want it to continue.

We have it in our ultimate power together to drive the dread disease of drug abuse from our neighborhoods and from our country. We have it in our unified power together to eradicate the dread heroin traffic, and to provide for the protection of upcoming generations from its temptations and availability.

Our joint action -- aggressive government programs fully supported by informed citizen activities -- can help determine the eventual character of our Republic. I, for one, have every confidence in the outcome.