

The original documents are located in Box 28, “4/9/76 - Remarks at Law Day Dinner, Irving Bar Association, Stadium Club, Irving, Texas” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

- THANK YOU , MARTIN (KAHN)
- SEN. JOHN TOWER
- JOHN LAWRENCE / ED KINCADE
- MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY
- IRVING BAR ASSOCIATION
MEMBERS + GUESTS

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN ~~THE~~

REMARKS AT LAW DAY DINNER,

IRVING, TEXAS

FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 1976

LET ME THANK YOU FOR YOUR WARM AND GENEROUS
WELCOME AND FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK BEFORE SUCH
A DISTINGUISHED AUDIENCE●

IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO RETURN TO TEXAS●

OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, MANY OF YOUR FINEST

SONS AND DAUGHTERS HAVE COME TO WASHINGTON TO SERVE

OUR COUNTRY -- JOHN TOWER, _____, _____,

_____, . . . THE LIST COULD GO ON AND ON.

TEXANS MAKE NOT ONLY REMARKABLY GOOD PUBLIC SERVANTS,

BUT VERY GOOD AMBASSADORS OF THE LONE STAR STATE /

BECAUSE ALL OF THEM LOVE TO SING YOUR PRAISES.

TEXAS, THEY TELL ME, IS NUMBER ONE IN
THE COUNTRY IN MANY IMPORTANT WAYS -- NUMBER ONE IN
CATTLE PRODUCTION, / NUMBER ONE IN OIL PRODUCTION, /
NUMBER ONE IN COTTON, / AND OFTEN NUMBER ONE IN
FOOTBALL.

I'M DELIGHTED TO SEE THAT TONIGHT YOU'RE
STILL SECOND TO NONE IN HOSPITALITY, TOO.

IN OBSERVANCE OF YOUR LAW DAY CELEBRATION
IN IRVING, I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE IF I
DIRECTED MY REMARKS THIS EVENING TO AN INCREASINGLY
SERIOUS PROBLEM ALL ACROSS AMERICA.

AS PRACTITIONERS OF THE LAW, AS
LEADERS OF YOUR COMMUNITY AND AS LOVING PARENTS,
ALL OF YOU MUST SHARE MY DEEPENING CONCERN ABOUT
A NEW WAVE OF DRUG ABUSE THAT IS AFFLICTING OUR NATION.

ONLY A FEW SHORT YEARS AGO, AS YOU WILL RECALL,

THE UNITED STATES WAS FACED WITH A VIRTUAL EPIDEMIC OF

DRUG ABUSE. LARGE QUANTITIES OF OPIUM WERE COMING OUT

OF POPPY FIELDS IN COUNTRIES SUCH AS TURKEY, WERE CONVERTED

INTO HEROIN IN PORT CITIES IN FRANCE, AND FROM THERE WERE

SMUGGLED INTO THE U.S.A..

THIS COUNTRY MOUNTED AN ACTIVE CAMPAIGN
AGAINST ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFIC, AND WITH THE COOPERATION OF
LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS BOTH HERE AND ABROAD, WE
EVENTUALLY BROKE THE BACK OF THE "FRENCH CONNECTION."

THERE WAS GOOD REASON TO BE PLEASED, THEN, / BECAUSE

IT SEEMED WE HAD NOT ONLY TURNED THE CORNER ON DRUG ABUSE, /

BUT WE HAD ALSO BEGUN TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT INROADS

INTO STREET CRIME.

OUR SUCCESS, HOWEVER, DID NOT LAST AS LONG
AS MOST OF US HOPED IT WOULD. THE BASE OF THE HEROIN
TRADE HAS NOW SHIFTED TO OTHER COUNTRIES, / AND TODAY
THERE IS A RENEWED AND ALARMING FLOW OF DRUG TRAFFIC
INTO THIS COUNTRY.

THE TIME HAS NOW COME TO STEP UP OUR FIGHT,
SHARPENING THE WEAPONS IN OUR ARSENAL AND LAUNCHING
A NEW AND MORE AGGRESSIVE ATTACK AGAINST THIS INSIDIOUS
ENEMY.

THE COST OF DRUG ABUSE TO THIS NATION IS NOW

STAGGERING:

-- EVERY YEAR, MORE THAN 5,000 AMERICANS DIE

FROM DRUG RELATED CAUSES.

-- EVERY YEAR, MORE THAN 170,000 INJURIES

CAN BE TRACED TO DRUGS.

-- EVERY YEAR, THE PROBLEMS OF DRUG ABUSE

COST US UP TO 17 BILLION DOLLARS.

-- AND SIGNIFICANTLY, THE GREATEST

BULK OF THIS 17 BILLION DOLLARS IS MONEY LOST THROUGH

CRIME. LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS ESTIMATE THAT

UP TO ONE-HALF OF ALL ROBBERIES, MUGGINGS,

BURGLARIES AND OTHER FORMS OF PROPERTY CRIMES ARE

COMMITTED BY ADDICTS TO SUPPORT THEIR EXPENSIVE AND

DEBILITATING HABITS.

THESE STATISTICS -- AS OMINOUS AS THEY
ARE -- REFLECT ONLY PART OF THE TRAGIC TOLL.

FOR EVERY TEENAGER KILLED BY A DRUG OVER-DOSE,
THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF OTHERS WHO DO NOT DIE BUT
CONTINUE ONLY THE MOTIONS OF LIVING.

THEY SIT IN CLASSROOMS WITHOUT LEARNING. THEY
GROW ISOLATED FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

WHEN THEY SHOULD BE PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE, THEY
CAN HARDLY COPE WITH THE PRESENT. AND THIS
DISEASE IS BY NO MEANS LIMITED TO YOUTH OR TO ANY
PARTICULAR GROUP IN OUR SOCIETY. THE SUBURBAN
HOUSEWIFE, THE WORKER ON THE ASSEMBLY LINE,
THE WHITE COLLAR PROFESSIONAL - NOBODY IS IMMUNE.

I PLEDGE TO YOU TONIGHT THAT I WILL SPARE

NO EFFORT TO CRUSH THE MENACE OF DRUG ABUSE•

CLEARLY, OUR FIRST DEFENSE MUST BE DIRECTED

AT OUR OWN BORDERS -- TO CLAMP DOWN ON THE ILLEGAL

FLOW OF DRUGS FROM FOREIGN SOURCES•

AS YOU KNOW, EIGHTY TO NINETY PERCENT
OF THE HEROIN COMING INTO THE UNITED STATES TODAY
HAS COME ACROSS THE BORDER FROM MEXICO.

THE PROBLEM IS NOT AN EASY ONE TO COPE
WITH. THERE ARE AS MANY AS 20,000 SMALL POPPY
FIELDS HIDDEN AWAY IN THE MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN OF
THE SIERRA MADRE.

THE DRUGS THAT COME FROM THESE FIELDS MIGHT BE SMUGGLED

HERE IN ANY ONE OF ALMOST A MILLION VEHICLES A WEEK

THAT CROSS THROUGH BORDER CHECKPOINTS, / OR ABOARD ANY

ONE OF 4,000 AIRCRAFT THAT ILLEGALLY PENETRATED THE BORDER

LAST YEAR, / OR EVEN IN THE BACKPACK OF SOMEONE WHO ILLEGALLY

WALKS ACROSS THE 2,000 MILE BORDER THAT WE SHARE WITH

MEXICO.

FORTUNATELY, THE GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO UNDER THE
LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA, HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY
CONCERNED WITH THIS PROBLEM AND HAS CRACKED DOWN HARD
ON BOTH THE GROWERS AND THE TRAFFICKERS.

WITH HELP PROVIDED BY OUR GOVERNMENT --

HELP THAT INCLUDES HELICOPTERS AND OTHER ADVANCED EQUIPMENT,

AND COMMITTING SUBSTANTIAL RESOURCES OF ITS OWN --

THE GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO IS UNDERTAKING THE BIGGEST

AND MOST EFFECTIVE CROP ERADICATION PROGRAM IN ITS HISTORY.

THOUSANDS OF FIELDS HAVE ALREADY BEEN WIPED OUT.

AND WHILE MANY OF THESE FIELDS WILL BE REPLANTED,

THE GOVERNMENT THERE ALSO PLANS FOR THE FIRST TIME

TO MAINTAIN A YEAR-ROUND ERADICATION PROGRAM.

THE EFFORT MADE ON THEIR SIDE OF THE BORDER

HAS BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY AIDED BY WHAT WE HAVE DONE

ON OUR OWN SIDE / THROUGH THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF FEDERAL,

STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES. IN PARTICULAR,

I WANT TO COMPLIMENT THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS OF TEXAS.

THEY HAVE DONE A FINE JOB IN HELPING TO CONTROL THE FLOW

OF ILLEGAL DRUGS, AND THEY DESERVE THE THANKS OF ALL AMERICANS.

I BELIEVE, AND THE LEADERS OF MEXICO BELIEVE,

THAT IF TOGETHER WE SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY { AS WE ARE DOING } --

WE CAN STEM THE TIDE OF THE NEW DRUG INVASION WITHIN A YEAR.●

THAT IS OUR GOAL●

BUT OUR EFFORTS MUST NOT STOP THERE.

WE MUST ALSO ACCELERATE OUR LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS HERE

IN OUR OWN COUNTRY.

FRANKLY, DESPITE ALL THE RHETORIC OF RECENT YEARS,

I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE YET SUCCEEDED IN MAKING

IT TOUGH ENOUGH FOR DRUG TRAFFICKERS. AS FAR AS I AM

CONCERNED, THE PEOPLE WHO TRAFFIC IN HARD DRUGS

ARE NOTHING LESS THAN MERCHANTS OF DEATH AND SHOULD BE PUT

BEHIND BARS -- FOR A LONG, LONG TIME.

YET, THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT STUDIES SHOW

THAT MORE THAN A QUARTER OF THOSE CONVICTED

OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING / DO NOT SPEND A SINGLE DAY IN JAIL.

THE EXTRAORDINARY LAXITY THAT SOMETIMES EXISTS

WAS ILLUSTRATED JUST LAST MONTH / IN A CASE WHEN

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ARRESTED 31 PEOPLE, /

MOST OF WHOM WERE MAJOR VIOLATORS RESPONSIBLE

FOR LARGE SHIPMENTS OF HEROIN INTO THE UNITED STATES.

NINETEEN OF THOSE ARRESTED WERE IMMEDIATELY FREED
ON A 500 DOLLAR PERSONAL RECOGNIZANCE BOND,
EVEN THOUGH THEIR OFFENSES WERE PUNISHABLE BY 15 YEARS
IN PRISON. ALL BUT TWO OF THE 19 HAD LONG ARREST RECORDS,
AND ONE WAS ON PAROLE FOR A NARCOTICS OFFENSE.

TO HIS GREAT CREDIT, THE NEW HEAD OF OUR DRUG ENFORCEMENT

ADMINISTRATION, PETE BENSINGER / WHO, INCIDENTALLY,

IS OFF TO A FINE START / - QUICKLY INTERVENED.

WARRANTS WERE RE-ISSUED FOR FOUR OF THE 19, / AND BAIL

WAS RAISED TO TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR EACH OF THE OTHERS.

I BELIEVE WE MUST CLOSE LEGAL LOOPHOLES THAT

PERMIT TRAFFICKERS TO ESCAPE THE FEDERAL PENITENTIARY.

THOSE WHO LIVE OFF THE MISERY OF OTHERS MUST PAY THE

PRICE -- AND THE HIGHER THE PRICE, THE BETTER.

LAST YEAR I SENT TO THE CONGRESS LEGISLATION

THAT WOULD REQUIRE MANDATORY PRISON SENTENCES FOR PERSONS

CONVICTED OF HIGH-LEVEL TRAFFICKING IN HEROIN AND

SIMILAR NARCOTICS•

SENTENCES WOULD BE NOT LESS

THAN THREE YEARS FOR SUCH TRAFFICKERS / AND WOULD RANGE

UP TO 30 YEARS•

UNFORTUNATELY, THIS LEGISLATION HAS BECOME

CAUGHT UP IN THE GREAT DEBATE OVER SENATE BILL NUMBER ONE --

WHICH WOULD OVERHAUL OUR FEDERAL PENAL CODE•

BECAUSE WE CANNOT AFFORD CONTINUED DELAY, I AM SEPARATING

OUT THIS MANDATORY SENTENCING PROPOSAL•

IN A SPECIAL DRUG MESSAGE THAT I WILL SOON SEND

TO THE CONGRESS, I WILL RESUBMIT THIS PROPOSAL AND CALL

FOR URGENT ACTION.

BEYOND HALTING THIS ILLEGAL FLOW OF DRUGS
FROM ABROAD AND STIFFENING OUR DOMESTIC LAW ENFORCEMENT,
STILL ANOTHER PRONG OF OUR ATTACK ON DRUG ABUSE MUST LIE
IN PREVENTION, TREATMENT, AND REHABILITATION.

IN RECENT YEARS, WE HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS

IN THE UNITED STATES IN CREATING A VERY LARGE AND

SUCCESSFUL TREATMENT NETWORK. TODAY, SOME

460 MILLION DOLLARS IN FEDERAL FUNDS IS SPENT ANNUALLY

ON PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION --

TEN TIMES MORE THAN WHAT WE SPENT IN 1969.

WE CAN NOW TREAT MORE THAN A QUARTER OF A MILLION DRUG ADDICTS

AT ONE TIME. IN ADDITION, RECENT STUDIES SHOW

THAT THE NUMBER OF ADDICTS WHO GO BACK TO DRUGS AFTER

THEY HAVE BEEN TREATED HAS DRAMATICALLY DECLINED.

ENCOURAGING PROGRESS HAS ALSO BEEN MADE

IN WORKING WITH LOCAL LEADERS ON PROGRAMS OF DRUG EDUCATION

AND COUNSELING. I KNOW THAT THE PEOPLE OF DALLAS

MUST TAKE SPECIAL PRIDE IN THE HIGHLY INNOVATIVE PROGRAM

THAT HAS BEEN SET UP WITH FEDERAL SEED MONEY AND IS NOW RUN

BY THE DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT UNDER

DOCTOR NOLAN ESTES.

THIS PROGRAM, BUILT ON THE PHILOSOPHY THAT THE DRUG
PROBLEM IS ACTUALLY A HUMAN PROBLEM, HAS TURNED
COUNTLESS NUMBERS AWAY FROM DRUG ABUSE AND HAS
HELPED TO REHABILITATE MANY OTHERS.

AND WHAT IMPRESSES ME MOST ABOUT THIS EFFORT IS THAT ITS LEADERS

ARE NOT ONLY CONCERNED ADULTS BUT YOUNG PEOPLE THEMSELVES --

YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE A MISSION IN LIFE: TO SAVE THEIR

CLASSMATES AND FAMILIES FROM A HORRIBLE FATE.

LOOKING OVER THE WIDE RANGE OF DRUG EFFORTS,

IT CAN BE SEEN THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST PLAY

AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN DEALING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT PROBLEMS

THAT ARE NATIONAL IN SCOPE AND IN MOBILIZING THE ENORMOUS

POTENTIAL RESOURCES OF STATES AND LOCALITIES.

WE ARE PURSuing AN ACTIVE PROGRAM NOW,

AND BUILDING UPON A WHITE PAPER WE ISSUED A FEW MONTHS AGO.

I PLAN TO ACCELERATE THAT PROGRAM IN THE FUTURE.

WE SHALL STEP UP OUR INTERDICTION EFFORTS.

WE SHALL STEP UP OUR LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS•

WE SHALL STEP UP OUR EFFORTS AT PREVENTION, TREATMENT

AND REHABILITATION•

AND WE SHALL STICK WITH IT

AS LONG AS WE MUST•

BUT LET ME ADD THIS FINAL NOTE:

IN EVERYTHING WE DO - WHETHER IN COMBATTING DRUGS,

IN SOLVING THE PROBLEMS OF OUR ECONOMY,

OR IN REGAINING ENERGY INDEPENDENCE FOR AMERICA --

WE CANNOT RELY SOLELY UPON WASHINGTON.

THIS COUNTRY IS GREAT NOT BECAUSE OF WHAT

GOVERNMENT HAS DONE FOR PEOPLE, BUT WHAT PEOPLE HAVE DONE

FOR THEMSELVES.

ALL OF THE RESOURCES THAT WE IN GOVERNMENT DEVOTE
TO THE DRUG PROBLEM WILL BE OF LITTLE USE UNLESS THE AMERICAN
PEOPLE THEMSELVES RALLY AND FIGHT THIS SCOURGE OF DRUG ABUSE
WITHIN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES AND WITHIN THEIR OWN FAMILIES.

THE MYSTERIES OF GROWING UP, OF FINDING MEANING

IN LIFE ARE PERHAPS MORE BAFFLING TODAY THAN THEY WERE

IN SIMPLER TIMES.

AS ADULTS, WE CANNOT PROVIDE ALL OF THE ANSWERS --

BUT WE CAN PROVIDE A LOVING AND CARING HOME,

WE CAN PROVIDE GOOD COUNSEL, WE CAN BUILD GOOD COMMUNITIES

IN WHICH TO LIVE, AND WE CAN SHOW THROUGH OUR OWN EXAMPLE

THAT LIFE IN THESE UNITED STATES IS STILL VERY MEANINGFUL

AND SATISFYING.

AMERICANS HAVE ALWAYS STOOD STRONG AND TALL

AGAINST ALL ENEMIES. DRUG ABUSE IS AN ENEMY WE CAN,

WE MUST, AND WE WILL OVERCOME.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

END OF TEXT