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PROPOSED STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT CONCERNING  
THE WHITE PAPER ON DRUG ABUSE

During the last six months the Domestic Council has conducted an intensive review of the drug abuse problem in the United States. I directed this review because I was concerned about reports of increasing availability and use of drugs. Specifically, I wanted to know the extent and nature of drug abuse in this country and the effectiveness of our current programs in responding to this serious problem.

The Domestic Council Drug Abuse Task Force has completed its review and has prepared a "White Paper on Drug Abuse" for my consideration. I am grateful to the Vice President, the members of the task force and to the many others from inside and outside of government who offered advice and counsel in the preparation of this report.

Drug abuse is a problem of deep personal concern to me and one which requires a careful but forceful policy both at home and abroad. We have completed an important first step. Now we must continue the vital process of communication and analysis which has begun.

In order to assure prompt implementation of this report, I am directing each Federal agency with direct program responsibility to analyze and respond to the White Paper within the next 60 days. I am also directing that the report be released to help refocus the current public dialogue on drug abuse.

This Administration is firmly committed to improving the quality of life for all Americans. Clearly drug abuse has no place in our society. I believe the White Paper outlines in realistic terms the drug abuse problem this nation faces and presents for my consideration comprehensive recommendations for ways in which the Federal government, working with state and local governments, and the private sector, can control drug abuse.

by Peter G. Bourne, M.D.

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The federal government has fumbled the ball again on drug abuse. Two new Cabinet committees have been established to deal with drug abuse with the promise that they will meet at least twice a year. There is little prospect that they will produce any major policy changes, and for the most part they seem to be only window dressing.

At the same time, federal support for treatment has not kept pace with the continuing growth of the problem. There are many concerned and perceptive people at the National Institute on Drug Abuse and in the Office of Drug Abuse Management at OMB (Office of Management and Budget), yet they seem unable to get the Administration to focus on the need for a re-analysis of the basic policies in the drug abuse field.

Perhaps it is unrealistic to expect a bold new look at the problem in an election year; yet those who have the knowledge and understanding of drug abuse issues seem to have been intimidated into silence.

At the same time, there seems to be throughout the country an awareness that some tough realities must be faced. Heroin addiction has risen in the last year in almost every major city and our capacity to deal with it has proven extraordinarily limited. As the mayor of one major city told me recently, "the point at which I am forced to deal with drug abuse is when I continue to be faced with rising crime rates and police corruption. I have to do something about it, even if it is a new and radical departure from what we have done previously."

Many political leaders seem to be coming to the hard realization that over the long haul, law enforcement efforts have not significantly diminished the availability of heroin and that treatment, even if it is available to fill the total demand, is not going to reduce the spread of addiction.

There seems to be no way to reduce the profit element from the heroin market with the approach we are now using. It is also apparent from the New York experience that harsh penalties and mandatory minimum sentences are no solution to the problem.

Many responsible people who only a few years ago would have been appalled at the notion of decriminalizing heroin are now willing to address it seriously as an important option that must be considered. The risk involved is the possibility that a large number of new addicts would suddenly emerge if the drug were available and cheap and legal penalties were removed for possession.

However, in most cities today heroin is so available that the situation could hardly be worse. It is also becoming apparent that for many users, addiction is not inevitable and social debilitation is not automatic, so that our stereotype of the heroin users as social outcasts and a permanent drain on society's good will and resources is not necessarily accurate.

Many politicians now feel that the cost of caring for a modest increase in the number of addicts is a reasonable trade-off for a significant anticipated drop in the crime rate in their communities by removing the high cost of obtaining heroin.

It is unfortunate that there is not more leadership from the Administration for what is increasingly seen as a position of realism. There are many potential pitfalls in decriminalizing heroin and we may not yet fully appreciate all the implications, but it is clear that the time has come for a clear, open and public discussion of the issue.

[Peter Bourne, former Asst. Director of the White House Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention, is a consultant to the Drug Abuse Council and a visiting lecturer at Harvard University. He is also an advisor to Presidential candidate Jimmy Carter. His statements reflect his own views and not those of the Carter campaign.]

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Bourne

September 25, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Jim Cannon *Jac*  
SUBJECT: WHITE PAPER ON DRUG ABUSE

The Domestic Council Drug Review Task Force which you established in April has completed its work, and a detailed white paper summarizing the task force's assessment of the extent and scope of the drug abuse problem and outlining its recommendations for improving the Federal effort is ready to be printed.

The Vice President and I have reviewed the draft white paper and believe that it contains sound recommendations which you should consider carefully. Further, we believe that this paper will be effective in stilling some of the criticism this Administration has gotten concerning its commitment to the drug program, and its management of it.

This memorandum reviews the major themes which run throughout the white paper and highlights the most important recommendations of the task force.

BASIC THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Drug abuse continues to be a major domestic problem, a problem which has been getting worse rather than better over the past year and a half. In its white paper, the task force sets forth the directions it believes the Administration should take in dealing with the problem, drawing heavily on the lessons learned over the past six years.

Specifically, the white paper:

- Acknowledges that total elimination of drug abuse is unlikely, but states that governmental actions can contain the problem and limits its adverse effects. In this regard, the white paper calls for toning down the rhetoric about "winning the war against drugs" and calls, instead, for realism in defining society's and the Federal government's objectives in dealing with what is likely to be a part of the American social scene for a long time to come.

- States that the problem is not one which can be dealt with by Federal efforts alone, and urges increased participation by State and local governments, community organizations and private industry.
- Confirms the validity of the basic Federal strategy of a balanced attack on both the supply and the demand for drugs. This is not only politically sound, but an impressive array of evidence suggests that the two efforts are mutually supportive and complementary.
- Calls for Federal priorities which reflect the fact that all drug use is not equally destructive. Highest priority in utilizing limited resources should be placed on heroin, barbiturates and amphetamines, with marihuana and cocaine being somewhat less emphasized.
- Recommends that supply reduction efforts be broadened beyond the current law enforcement focus. In particular, greater attention should be given to regulating and monitoring legitimate production of drugs such as barbiturates, which are also used illicitly.
- Recommends that a higher priority be given to development of international cooperation in preventing illicit production of drugs and that special attention be given to Mexico as the major source country for U. S. markets.
- Recommends that the current treatment focus of demand reduction efforts be supplemented with increased attention to programs which prevent the problem before it develops and to vocational rehabilitation for ex-addicts to enhance their ability to rejoin society as productive members.
- States that significant opportunities exist for improving the effectiveness with which the drug program is managed now that the period of rapid growth is over and the departments have had time to assimilate the increase in resources. Particular attention is required to strengthen management within agencies, improve coordination and cooperation among agencies and rigorously evaluate and follow up results.
- Endorses the concept of strengthening Cabinet management by reducing the degree of direct White House management of the program. The paper recommends several specific steps, including creation of a Cabinet Committee on Drug Abuse Prevention and continuation of a small OMB drug office.

Finally, although not specifically set forth in the white paper, it is the sense of the task force that these findings and recommendations form a solid base for a major Presidential address reaffirming the importance of Federal, State and local efforts to combat drug abuse.

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

FACT SHEET

WHITE PAPER ON DRUG ABUSE

The President today has directed that the Report of the Domestic Council's Drug Abuse Task Force be made public.

Background

President Ford, last April, called for an in-depth review of the Federal Government's entire drug abuse prevention program. To accomplish this mission, a Domestic Council task force, consisting of senior representatives of 12 Federal departments and agencies, was created and charged with responsibility for preparing a comprehensive report to the President.

The specific objectives of the review were to:

- . Assess the effectiveness of current drug programs and policies;
- . Determine if the Federal drug strategy, priorities and organizational structures are appropriate to meet current needs;
- . Examine the need for, and structure of, a drug management and coordination mechanism in the Executive Office of the President.

That report, the "White Paper on Drug Abuse", has been completed and presents the task force's extensive findings and recommendations in detail.

Highlights and Recommendations of the Task Force

The task force strongly endorses the concept of a Federal program which balances the effort to reduce the supply of drugs with an effort to reduce the demand for drugs, and it recommends that this concept should continue to be the cornerstone of the Federal strategy for containing drug abuse.

In addition to confirming the validity of this fundamental strategy, the White Paper contains numerous programmatic recommendations based on the following themes:

- . We must be realistic about what can be achieved and what the appropriate Federal role is in the war against drugs. We must be prepared to continue our efforts and commitment to contain the problem at a minimal level. We must also recognize that the Federal Government cannot do the job alone. Only through the combined efforts of the Federal, State and local governments, private individuals and business, and a variety of local organizations, working together, can we hope to ultimately succeed.

- . Not all drug use is equally destructive and we should give priority in our treatment and law enforcement efforts to those drugs which pose the greatest risks to the individual and to society, as well as to compulsive users of drugs of any kind. The highest risk drugs are heroin, amphetamines, particularly when taken intravenously, and barbiturates when taken in combination with other drugs.
- . Supply reduction is broader than law enforcement and we should utilize a variety of approaches and tools to reduce the supply of illicit drugs.
- . Federal law enforcement efforts should focus on the development of major conspiracy cases against the leaders of high-level trafficking networks and should move away from "street-level" activities.
- . The current treatment focus of demand reduction efforts should be supplemented with increased attention to prevention and vocational rehabilitation.
- . Neither successful prevention nor successful rehabilitation is drug specific. Both should be closely integrated with other, comprehensive social programs.
- . The success program managers have in enlisting the support and cooperation of foreign governments, and State and local governments and private organizations domestically, is greatly enhanced when our national leaders clearly manifest their commitment to combatting drug abuse.

Finally, the White Paper observes that there is a significant need to better coordinate and manage the Federal drug program and to more effectively mobilize and utilize all the resources available, and it makes a number of recommendations to accomplish these objectives.

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Office of the White House Press Secretary  
(Vail, Colorado)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Drug abuse is a tragic national problem which saps our Nation's vitality. It is also a major contributor to our growing crime rate. All of us must redouble our efforts to combat this problem.

Earlier this week I met with Representative Charles B. Rangel and other members of the Congress to discuss the problem of drug abuse. The Congressmen reported the growing availability and use of illicit drugs and expressed their concern about the continuing flow of drugs across the Southwest border from Mexico and their continuing concern about a possible resurgence of heroin traffic from Turkey.

Aware of the worsening situation, last spring I directed a high-priority review of the entire Federal effort in drug law enforcement, treatment and prevention, and international control. The resulting White Paper on Drug Abuse contained a frank assessment of where we are in these efforts, as well as a number of comprehensive recommendations to improve our response to this critical problem. I endorse the White Paper, and the budget I will submit in January will request sufficient funds to implement all of its major recommendations.

This Administration already has begun to take strong action to deal with the mounting threat, however. I have spoken with Presidents Echeverria of Mexico and Lopez-Michelsen of Colombia and with Prime Minister Demeril of Turkey in an effort to strengthen cooperation of other nations involved in the fight against illicit drug traffic. Because of my particular concern about the problem of Mexican heroin, I am directing Secretary of State Kissinger to express to the Mexican government my personal concern that we explore opportunities for improved control. I have also directed the Domestic Council Drug Abuse Task Force to present me with specific recommendations for improving our ability to control drug trafficking along the Southwest border.

I call upon the Congress to enact my proposal for mandatory minimum sentences for drug traffickers, so those who are spreading this evil throughout our communities will be put behind bars where they belong. And I urge the Congress to ratify the Convention of Psycotropic Substances, so we can fulfill our obligations to the other nations of the world to see that strong international controls exist for all drugs. In the weeks ahead I will send to the Congress a comprehensive message on drug abuse establishing a framework for a broad government response to the problem.

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Peter Bourne - Heroin

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AM-DRUGS 10-16

ADV FOR 6PM EDT

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- DRUG ADVISERS TO BOTH PRESIDENT FORD AND JIMMY CARTER SAID SATURDAY THEY BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD LOOK INTO EVENTUAL DECRIMINALIZATION OF HEROIN, ALTHOUGH THEY STOPPED SHORT OF ANY SUGGESTION THE TWO CANDIDATES MIGHT FAVOR LAWS TO DO SO.

PETER BOURNE, A WASHINGTON PSYCHIATRIST WHO IS A SENIOR CAMPAIGN ADVISER TO CARTER AND HEADED HIS STATE DRUG ABUSE PROGRAM WHEN CARTER WAS GOVERNOR OF GEORGIA, SAID IT WAS TIME TO "REEXAMINE THE QUESTION OF WHETHER WE OUGHT TO DECRIMINALIZE HEROIN" AND SET UP TREATMENT CENTERS TO DISPENSE IT LEGALLY.

DR. ROBERT DUPONT, DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DRUG ABUSE FOR FORD, SAID THAT "PENALTIES FOR POSSESSION OF ALL DRUGS OUGHT TO BE LESSENED AND ULTIMATELY REMOVED" AND THAT GOVERNMENT ENFORCEMENT POLICY IS ALREADY AIMED PRIMARILY AT ARRESTING TRAFFICKERS RATHER THAN USERS.

THE VIEWS OF BOTH MEN WERE INCLUDED IN AN ARTICLE IN SUNDAY'S NATIONAL OBSERVER NEWSPAPER.

THE ARTICLE QUOTED BOURNE AS MAKING CLEAR HIS VIEWS ON HEROIN WERE NOT THOSE OF CARTER. THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE HAS SAID HE FAVORED DECRIMINALIZATION OF POSSESSION OF SMALL AMOUNTS OF MARIJUANA ON THE FIRST OFFENSE, BUT ON HEROIN HAS SAID ONLY HE WANTS TO STEM TRAFFICKING.

BOURNE NOTED THAT NO HEALTH AUTHORITIES IN THE UNITED STATES HAVE SO FAR ADVOCATED MAKING HEROIN AVAILABLE AT TREATMENT CENTERS.

"WE ARE EXPLORING, NOT ADVOCATING," BOURNE SAID. "POLITICALLY, THIS IS A HOT ISSUE."

DUPONT SAID HE WAS AGAINST SETTING UP CLINICS TO GIVE HEROIN ADDICTS LEGAL SUPPLIES OF THE NARCOTIC, SIMILAR TO THE SYSTEM IN GREAT BRITAIN. HE SAID SUCH A SYSTEM WOULD RESULT IN HEALTH COSTS EVEN HIGHER TO SOCIETY THAN THE CRIME COSTS OF ILLEGAL HEROIN.

HEROIN NOW COSTS THE NATION LESS THAN \$10 BILLION YEARLY, DUPONT SAID, BUT IF LEGALIZED FOR ADDICTS COULD BECOME A PROBLEM SIMILAR TO ALCOHOL, WHICH COSTS AN ESTIMATED \$25 TO \$35 BILLION YEARLY IN DEATHS, TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS, HOSPITAL COSTS AND TIME LOST FROM WORK.

IF HEROIN WERE MADE MORE READILY AVAILABLE, DUPONT CONTENDED, "IT WOULD BE MORE WIDELY USED, AND WE THINK THE HEALTH COSTS WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY HIGHER THAN \$10 BILLION."

THERE ARE NOW ESTIMATED TO BE AS MANY AS 500,000 HEROIN ADDICTS IN THE UNITED STATES, AN INCREASE SINCE 1973 WHEN THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION BELIEVED IT WAS "TURNING THE CORNER ON HEROIN ADDICTION."

DUPONT SAID THE FULL FORCE OF THE LAW SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE USED AGAINST ALL DRUG SELLERS, INCLUDING THOSE WHO DEAL IN MARIJUANA. "BUT IF DECRIMINALIZATION MEANS POSSESSION, IT'S ALREADY WELL ADVANCED," HE SAID, ADDING THAT ON THE FEDERAL LEVEL TODAY "THERE ARE ALMOST NO ARRESTS FOR THE POSSESSION OF DRUGS."

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