

to fulfill its humanitarian mission, providing assistance to those in need and easing suffering around the world. We must continue this tradition, and, in the spirit of service, support this voluntary agency because it truly belongs to all Americans. Each of us can help keep the American Red Cross strong through our donations of time, money, and blood.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America and Honorary Chairman of the American Red Cross, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 1997 as American Red Cross Month. I urge all the people of the United States to support the humanitarian work of their local Red Cross chapters by volunteering and participating in Red Cross blood drives.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 25, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on February 27.

Remarks Announcing the 1997 National Drug Control Strategy and an Exchange With Reporters

February 25, 1997

The President. Thank you very much. First of all, thank you, Nathan, for your introduction and your commitment, and I thank all the young people who are here from the Boys and Girls Club, from the D.A.R.E. programs. I want to thank the members of the President's Drug Policy Council who are standing here behind me and those out in the audience who have been introduced by the Vice President and by General McCaffrey. And I thank the Members of Congress for being here and their support, and all the rest of you who are involved in this battle.

Let me say a special word of appreciation to General McCaffrey. He has literally been tireless in developing a national strategy to reduce illegal drug use and, more importantly, to implement it in a way that makes a difference in the lives of all Americans. I knew that he was well-suited for the job. I had had a lot of exposure to General McCaffrey before I asked him to do this job. But even so, I have been surprised by the increased intensity of his tenacity and focus, and for that I am grateful. I think it gives us a chance to turn this situation among our young people around, with all of your help.

Let me say at the outset, one of the things that I have tried to do, and one of the reasons I like this drug policy so much, is that it is focused on children and therefore it is a part of what I think ought to be our overall mission, which is to give our children a safe, wholesome, constructive upbringing that begins with a drug-free life, appropriate health care, safe streets, and a decent education.

I want to thank the Attorney General—today, the Justice Department has announced something else that I think is important. I'd just like to begin, because I think we need to look at this in terms of the safety of our children. Today the Justice Department announced that in the first 28 months since the Brady bill went into effect—another law directed to the safety of our children—more than 186,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers were blocked from buying guns over the counter, more than 186,000, from March of 1994 to the end of June of 1996. And more than 70 percent were rejected because the applicant was an indicted or convicted felon. Now, it seems to me that, for all those who are still out there campaigning against the Brady bill, those of us who support it can now rest our case. It's the right thing to do for America. It's making us safer. It's giving these children a chance to grow up drug-free. And I ask all of you in law enforcement to redouble your efforts to support it and to do what we can to defend it.

Our five-part drug strategy is another part of making America safer for our children. In 10 years, a young person, a young man or woman Nathan's age, will be in his or her early twenties, a time when a person should be well on the road to becoming a contribut-

ing member of society, an adult with responsible duties. Those 10 years, they're a pivotal 10 years. We're learning all the time about how formative the young years are in a person's life when intelligence is formed, but we also need to concentrate on the formative years when not only intelligence but good judgment is formed and decisions are made about whether people will be good citizens, good workers, good parents, and among other things, drug-free.

What happens to people in those 10 years should be an integral part of every drug strategy. This is an urgent issue. You know, there is hardly a day that passes when we don't read in the newspaper about yet another child becoming a victim of violence. Every American should be angry that a 9-year-old cannot make her way safely to her grandmother's door in a Chicago housing project—angry that she was brutally attacked and left for dead. That child will suffer with great physical and emotional pain for the rest of her life. A portion of her childhood was taken from her. And whenever an attack like that happens, a portion of our humanity is taken from all of us.

Last week in Chicago, Hillary asked that anyone who has information about that attack, contact the local law enforcement officials. I want to extend that call today and ask that all of us do more to keep watch over our children. We have to become angry whenever any child—one single child—becomes prey for drugs or violence or abuse, and we should use our anger to take action.

Last week I unveiled our youth violence strategy to keep gangs, guns, and drugs off our street and called for new protections for our children, including safety locks on guns and extending the Brady bill to violent youthful offenders. But fundamentally this course will only change if all of us can teach our children right from wrong and if all of us can help them to steer away to a more productive, positive life.

That is what we have to focus on in this drug strategy. We know what works. We know what works. There are people here who have been working in this vineyard for years and years and years. We know that bipartisan cooperation works. We know persistence and community action works. All were factors in

reducing illegal drug use by half in the last 15 years. But we also know that during this time, drug use by adolescents, almost unbelievably, went up. And I might add, until last year so was the crime rate by young people going up while the overall crime rate was dropping. And the two things were clearly related.

This is not a problem confined only to the poor or to those in inner cities. It cuts across from rich to middle class to poor, from urban to suburban to rural. In each of these places there are children who are getting in trouble when they ought to be choosing a better life. Among eighth graders, in the last few years, drug use is up 150 percent. An eighth grader, typically, is 13 or 14 years old. That's why prevention is important at that age and indeed even considerably younger. If we teach our children well, more of them will live well away from harm's way.

Our drug strategy must be more than a year-to-year approach, but a guide to action for the next decade for those critical 10 years of these young people's lives, to reduce drug use and its consequences and to keep our young people out of the kind of harm that the invasion of drugs into their bodies will cause. We should first begin by giving our children the straight facts. We know that the more children are aware of the dangers of drugs and believe the facts, the more likely they are to avoid them. We propose to add up to \$175 million to seed a far-reaching media campaign to get out the facts and shape the attitudes of these young people. We'll be seeking matching funds from the private sector for a total of \$350 million because this must be a shared responsibility. If a child does watch television—and what child doesn't—he or she should not be able to escape these messages.

And again, let me say I want to thank General McCaffrey for bringing this idea to me and pointing out how much we had permitted public advertising aimed at young people about the dangers of drugs to decline over the last few years. That is one of the seminal contributions that he has made to my understanding of this issue and I appreciate it and I ask the Congress to help us to get this job done.

Second, we must reduce drug-related crime and violence. Drug-trafficking supports gangs and sets off gang warfare. A million Americans are arrested every year for violating the drug laws. Let me say that again: A million Americans are arrested every year for violating drug laws. Three-quarters of the growth in the number of Federal prison inmates is due to drug offenses. We will enforce the law vigorously, but we have to do more than make more jail space.

I saw yesterday that two of our largest States, Florida and California, now have prison budgets bigger than their higher education budgets, that prison construction is growing all over America much faster than constructions in our colleges and universities, even though enrollment is going up and older people are trying to go back to college. We have to do more to prevent these things from occurring in the first place, more to take the guns out of hands of criminals and juveniles, more to use the criminal justice system to reduce drug demand and break the cycle of drugs and violence. Drug courts and mandatory drug testing and treatment are effective. I'm pleased to announce that the Justice Department is providing \$16 million in grants to more than 125 communities across our Nation for planning, implementing, or improving drug courts. I have seen them work; I know they will make a difference.

Third, we have to work to eliminate the social consequences of illegal drug use. A third of all AIDS and HIV cases are drug-related—a third. More than 3.6 million Americans, as the General said, are addicted to drugs. Drugs kill 14,000 of our fellow citizens every year. Often, people who use illegal drugs are people who go to class or hold jobs or have families. They drain our productivity. We can begin to reduce these circumstances if we can further decrease the number of casual drug users and if we can help chronic users to overcome their dependency. It is important that we try to do both.

Fourth, we have to do more to shield our frontiers against drug-trafficking. We all know that this is a very difficult task. Hundreds of millions of people enter our Nation every year. Hundreds of millions of tons of cargo are shipped here every year. Just one millionth of all that cargo is illegal drugs. One

millionth of all that cargo is illegal drugs. But that is still far too much and an awful lot of cargo. Our job is to stop it without hurting the legal commerce and movement that makes us the trade leader of the world. Along our border to the south with Mexico, crime and violence linked to drugs must be brought under control. Our 1998 budget will bring considerable reinforcement to that border.

Fifth, we have to reduce drug cultivation, production, and trafficking abroad and at home. We've made a start by supporting alternatives to drug crops. In Peru, coca cultivation dropped by 18 percent. In the next decade, we want to completely eliminate the cultivation of coca for illicit consumption. If we help with alternative crops, that is a viable, viable policy in many cases.

We've also had some successes against trafficking. The Coast Guard's Operation Frontier Shield in the eastern Caribbean between October 1st and December 1st of last year seized 14,000 pounds of illicit drugs, compared to 5,400 pounds for the entire previous year. It seized seven smuggling vessels and achieved an 80 percent interdiction rate, versus 20 percent in the previous year. We can do better with interdiction, and we're learning to do it.

Throughout the Caribbean and in South America, we've captured more than 100 tons of cocaine a year. With the cooperation of other nations and with regional organizations, we're committed to building on our record of success. And when Secretary Albright returns from her trip this afternoon, we'll be looking at certification on counternarcotics operations. We are committed to cooperating with our friends in Latin America. That's one of the reasons why I asked Mack McLarty to be my special envoy to the Americas. We want to cooperate with them, but we want them to cooperate with us as well. We want to reduce our demand for drugs, but we are determined to reduce the supply as well.

Finally, let me say we have to do more to work together here at home. On May 21st, I will host the first White House mayors conference on drug control, to bring together not only mayors but police officers and prosecutors, too, to make sure that in every community we are doing the very best job we can. I want parents, teachers, law enforce-

ment, and other community leaders to help us. I want our young people to help us, most of all. We did not create this problem overnight, and it will not be solved overnight, but over that critical decade of these young people's lives who are here, we can lift a whole generation away from the grip of a terrible menace.

Thanks to the efforts of many people, we now have a rational, coherent, and long-term strategy. Its ultimate success will depend upon the support it receives from every American. And ultimately, it will depend upon the willingness of our young people to listen, to learn, to be strong, and to find support. The rest of us have to be that support. There is no more urgent priority. Thank you very much.

1996 Campaign Financing

Q. Mr. President, in a short time, we in the media will have access to documents which reportedly contain your feelings that overnight stays at the White House could be used as a motivation to get——

The President. This is not a national priority.

Q. ——could be used as a motivation for getting people to contribute more to the Democratic National Committee.

The President. That's not what they contain.

Q. Well, I'm—we have not seen these documents yet.

The President. Well, I'll tell you what. I'll be glad to answer the questions, but you should see it first. What the document says—there's a document in there that points out that in early 1995, a lot of the people that helped me get elected President in '92 thought that they had gotten estranged, in effect, from me, that we had not kept in touch with them. And Terry McAuliffe sent me a memo suggesting things we ought to do to reestablish contact, which I thought was a good memo. And I told him to proceed. And I told Nancy Hernreich, in addition to that, that I wanted to ask some of my friends who had helped me when I got elected President that I hadn't been in touch with to come to the White House and spend the night with me. That is a reference to that.

And later, by the way, today, sometime, we're going to release the people—the number of people who stayed at the White House in the last 4 years, and you will see that the people that worked for me and helped to raise funds for me were a small percentage of the total number of people who stayed at the White House. But they were my friends, and I was proud to have them here. And I do not believe people who lawfully raise money for people running for office are bad people. I think they're good people. They make the system work that we have now. I'm proud that they helped me, and I was proud to have them here. I did not have any strangers here. The Lincoln Bedroom was never sold. That was one more false story we have had to endure. And the facts will show what the truth is.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:37 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Boys and Girls Club member Nathan Habel, who introduced the President; Terence McAuliffe, finance chair, Clinton/Gore '96; and Nancy Hernreich, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Oval Office Operations.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the 1997 National Drug Control Strategy

February 25, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit the *1997 National Drug Control Strategy* to the Congress. This strategy renews our bipartisan commitment to reducing drug abuse and its destructive consequences. It reflects the combined and coordinated Federal effort that is directed by National Drug Control Policy Director Barry McCaffrey and includes every department and over 50 agencies. It enlists all State and local leaders from across the country who must share in the responsibility to protect our children and all citizens from the scourge of illegal drugs.

In the *1996 National Drug Control Strategy*, we set forth the basis of a coherent, rational, long-term national effort to reduce illicit drug use and its consequences. Building