



Department of Justice

REMARKS

BY

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BEFORE THE
GREATER SPOKANE SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNCIL LUNCHEON

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON
THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 1990

It is a real pleasure today to be meeting with such an active, dedicated group as the Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council. Our United States Attorney John Lamp has told me of your good work, which I come here to praise and encourage -- hoping to see it emulated by other communities, willing to draw the line on drugs.

Let me say first how much I like your logo -- and what it stands for. Local citizens linked arm-in-arm -- some of them law enforcement officers -- saying, "Together, we draw the line." I'd like you to think of me as linking arms with you, and if you will allow me, I will even enlarge on your motto: American society itself must draw the line in this fight against what President Bush rightly calls "the scourge of drugs." And I agree with you whole-heartedly that the line identifies community values. These values -- human values, spiritual values, American values -- are what I want to talk to you about today.

We have grown great in this country and around the world through our own unique American combination of toughness and compassion.

Toughness means cracking down on the violence and crime that are so often drug-related, in order to protect the first civil right of every American -- the right to be free from fear in our homes, on our streets, and in our communities. That is the responsibility of local law enforcement, but it is also our major

responsibility at the Department of Justice, as we go after drug dealers and international drug king pins to stop their nefarious trade. Let me assure you that those we catch in street sweeps, or in marijuana raids on public lands, or through extradition from Colombia, or by arrival from Panama will face justice under the rule of law. Whatever we can do to get tough with drug traffickers contributes in some eventual way to ensuring every member of your community the right to be safe and secure.

But toughness alone will not work. We need compassion as well. Compassion to help those trapped by social, personal, or economic circumstances beyond their control. This is another way of approaching the same cause of crime -- drug abuse. If we are tough about drug law enforcement, we must also be compassionate about drug-use prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation -- and the need to educate our young people about the quality of a life not dependent on drugs.

As I recently told a somewhat surprised audience: "If we want to lose the war on drugs, we can just leave it to law enforcement." I wasn't belittling our concerted campaign to interdict the drug traffic, nor our agents' brave record of pursuing and apprehending the drug lords. But I was trying to emphasize that our effort to conquer drugs will eventually be won on the battlefield of values. Though we can enforce laws, we

cannot enforce values. We can only propound them, and teach them -- and represent them ourselves.

Ultimately, each individual must choose between the dead-end despair of a drug-dependent lifestyle or a drug-free hope for his or her future. That is why your insistence on values -- on drawing the line -- is so vitally important. A man or woman can only make this life's journey on the basis of his or her own values. That, in the end, is the only certainty that he or she will draw the line.

But values are also expressed -- and supported -- through communal action, such as the impressive educational efforts you have undertaken here in Greater Spokane. I am delighted to find you putting together events like your New Year's Eve celebration -- the "Ice and Rock Party," with its emphasis on a healthy lifestyle -- and free "safe rides home" from the Transit Authority. And I want one of your litterbags to take back to the Justice Department. That says it all: "Drugs Are Garbage."

I guess you could say that at Justice, we're doing everything we can to collect the garbage. We are determined to arrest, prosecute, convict, and incarcerate drug traffickers, and seize their assets by forfeiture. This certainty of swift and sure punishment will, we believe, deter others contemplating

illegal drug use or trafficking. It will keep them from spreading any more of this garbage.

In support of that goal, I testified recently before the House Subcommittee on Appropriations on the President's budget request for the Department of Justice, which would devote 45 percent of our resources to anti-drug efforts of one kind or another. That is a major commitment to our National Drug Control Strategy that puts the DEA, the FBI, and other components of Justice on the line against drugs.

But so long as enough people are willing to pay exorbitant prices for illegal drugs, others will risk prison or even a racketeer's rub-out to try to make themselves rich by supplying the demand.

So we'll fight the drug war with all the law enforcement resources at our disposal. And in this regard, we have asked Congress for additional tools to use in the war on drugs -- tools such as a new death penalty law, which we want to see enacted this year. But it's going to take more than dollars, more than police, more than law enforcement.

Above all, it's going to require our unstinting commitment to the values that have made us what we are.

Sometimes we think of laws and values as the same. They're related, but they're not the same.

We establish laws to codify certain rules and standards that allow us to live together peacefully as a free people.

But it's our values that inspire our laws, not our laws that establish our values. Laws tell us what we must do. Values summon us to what we should do.

The better we maintain our values, the less resort we need to the law. And it's those values we choose to live by that define a civilization.

Kindness, compassion, decency, generosity, these all are deeply ingrained in the American spirit.

So, too, is a rigorous sense of justice and fair play.

When we see someone in trouble, we rush to respond. When we see someone in need, we open our hearts and our pocketbooks.

So I firmly believe that to achieve the "kinder, gentler America" sought by our President, it's going to take the force of

values as well as the force of law -- the force of will, to be sure, but the force of reason and the force of example as well.

No, our struggle to conquer the scourge of drugs will not be decided just in the courtroom. It must take place in the classroom, in the workplace, in our houses of worship, in the community, through organizations such as your Substance Abuse Council, and yes, in the family.

Many of us grew up in a simpler time when we didn't even lock our doors at night. We didn't have to.

Now in some of our great cities people double and triple lock their doors even in the daytime.

They do so because drug-related crime has left them fearful of desperate intrusion, even deadly assault. Your efforts to rebuild communal values offer hope for the day when those doors can be unlocked again. . .and our citizens can be freed of the fear that often imprisons them.

But to succeed, we must fight to revitalize our values -- the values of self respect and self-reliance and, above all, of the integrity of the individual mind and spirit, functioning as God designed them to function.

These values begin with the individual, are nurtured in the family, and sustained in our neighborhoods. Your drug prevention efforts target all of those areas -- and more. Your dedication to a drug-free society and your community-minded work toward that goal will surely advance us toward our common goal -- ensuring that basic right of all Americans, to be free from fear, will forever be ours.

Our goal is straightforward. It is an America -- and a world -- where "pot" once again means a useful cooking utensil, where "crack" is the sound of a baseball hitting a "bat," where "grass" is something to mow, not smoke, and where "heroin(e)" means a Helen Keller, a Christa McAuliffe, a Sandra Day O'Conner, or a Barbara Bush.