

The original documents are located in Box 11, folder “Drug Abuse - Trip to Miami, March 8, 1976” of the James M. Cannon Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

EVAN CARL
Wm

March 5, 1976



MEMORANDUM FOR: Jim Cannon
FROM: Dick Parsons D.
SUBJECT: Agenda -- Miami Trip

Sunday, March 7, 1976

5:46 p.m. Lv. Washington National (Eastern #197)
8:14 p.m. Ar. Miami

(Dick Parsons, Customs Commissioner Mike Acree
and DEA Deputy Administrator Jerry Jensen)

[Miami Lakes Inn and Country Club]

Monday, March 8, 1976

8:30 - 9:00 a.m. "AM Miami"
WPLG-TV (10), a Post Newsweek Station
3900 Biscayne Boulevard
Contact: Frank Lynn
Telephone: 305/573-7111

10:00 - 11:30 a.m. Discussion: Federal/State/Local Cooperation
Chiefs of Police
Garland Watkins -- Miami
Rocky Pomerance -- Miami Beach
Leo Callahan -- Fort Lauderdale
Director of Public Safety
E. Wilson Purdy -- Dade County

Robert W. Rust, United States Attorney, Miami
Rear Admiral Austin D. Wagner, Commander,
7th Coast Guard District, Miami
Albert F. Basemore, Regional Commissioner
United States Customs Service
John Lund, Regional Director
DEA Miami Regional Office

11:30 - 12:00 Noon Informal Press Conference (both TV and Press)
DEA Regional Headquarters
Phoenix Building - Koger Executive Center
8400 Northwest 53rd Street
Telephone: 305/820-4800

More

12:00 Noon Telephone Interview
WIOD Radio
"Larry King Show"
Contact: Rawles Sansone
Telephone: 305/759-4311
(He will be expecting your call.)

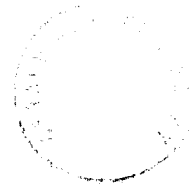
12:15 p.m. Telephone Interview
WKAT Radio (CBS)
✓ Contact: Joe Freed, News Director
Telephone: 305/531-8181
(This is an all-news station, and
Mr. Freed will be expecting your call.)

12:30 - 2:00 p.m. Working Lunch with DEA. Briefing on recent
major conspiracy case.

2:30 - 3:30 Inspect Customs Facility at Airport
(including demonstration of "Sniffer")

4:30 p.m. Lv. Miami (Eastern #176)

6:55 p.m. Ar. Washington National



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 5, 1976

Dear Frank:

This will confirm arrangements we discussed on the telephone today regarding the appearance on "AM Miami" of Mr. James Cannon, Assistant to the President, next Monday, March 8, 1976.

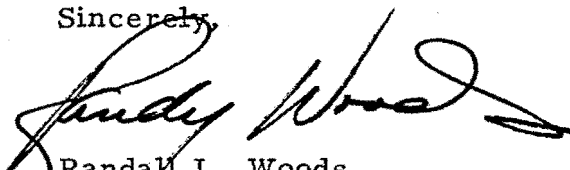
I have told Jim of your interest, and he is looking forward to seeing you at 8:30 a.m. on Monday. He will ask for you when he arrives at the studios.

Attached for your information is a copy of Jim's biographical sketch.

Thanks again for your interest. I know you will enjoy meeting Jim.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

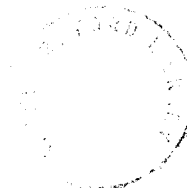


Randall L. Woods
Deputy Director of the
Office of Communications

SARILA STAINBACK

Mr. Frank Lynn
"AM Miami"
WPLG-TV (10)
3900 Biscayne Boulevard
Miami, Florida 33137

cc: Jim Cannon



③ Winston - money - so work can stop in
good places, marijuana, & cigarettes

* Approach re Def - get some of
~~the~~ outmoded equipment for
DEA + Customs -

Purdy - use military planes

Post - Nat Guards not under posse
comitatus - put some more
sophisticated planes over Air
National Guard

Watkins - losing ground due - not getting
attention of Washington -
people approaching cars to sell drugs
News media - Don't really give
way to American people
Law enforcement deteriorating
Unless American people know info,
won't see their paper mentality.
No I mentality - awareness

Mr. Frank Lynn
"AM Miami"
WFLC-TV (10)
3900 Biscayne Boulevard
Miami, Florida 33137
cc: Jim Cannon



UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Memorandum

MR. JAMES CANNON
TO : Assistant to the President for
Domestic Affairs

DATE: 3/5/76

J.A. FROM : JOHN A. LUND, Jr., Regional Director
DEA, Miami Regional Office

7-30 W Hotel

SUBJECT: Scheduling for Monday, March 8, 1976

10:00 A.M. - 11:30 A.M.

Miami Regional Office Conference Room - meet with local law enforcement authorities and DEA Region staff:

Robert W. Rust
U.S. Attorney *S. Dist. FLA*

John A. Lund, Jr.
Regional Director

E. Wilson Purdy
Director, Public Safety
Department

David W. Costa
Deputy Regional Director

Chief Garland Watkins
Miami Police Department

Fred T. Dick
Associate Regional Director

Chief Rocky Pomerance
Miami Beach Police Dept.

Ivan Wurms
Staff Assistant

Albert F. Bazemore
Regional Commissioner
U.S. Customs Service

David J. Connolly
Assistant Regional Director

Admiral Austin C. Wagner
Commander, 7th Coast
Guard District

David L. Westrate
Assistant Regional Director

Irwin Weinstein
Assistant Regional Director

11:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

Press availability, Miami Regional Office Training Room

12:30 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Region 5 briefing and lunch at Regional Office Conference Room



General Intelligence Overview
Airport Operations
Caribbean Operations
Compliance Programs
OSORNO Investigation

Special Agent Richard DuRant
Special Agent Charles Martinez
Group Supervisor Charles Walker
Supervisor Anthony Acri
Special Agent James Milford

2:00 P.M.

Visit U. S. Customs, Miami International Airport

4:40 P.M.

Return to Washington, D. C.

Lodging at: Miami Lakes Inn & Country Club
Telephone: 821-1150

Home telephone: 822-7625 John A. Lund, Jr.

Home telephone: 792-5118 David W. Costa
(Plantation, FL)

Office telephone - 24-Hour: 591-4870

Copies to: Mr. Dick Parsons
Mr. Vernon Acree
Mr. Jerry Jenson



①

- Part
- 1) Recruit - coming to take new days aboard
v.s. flag vessel
 - 2) minimum mandatory as proposed by D
 - 3) Troops -
 - 4) outlook - 90-100 ^{over} per cost
be more ^{inductees} than they can draft
losses than they can try

- Ponemon:
- I excellent cooperation w/ Fed. + local
100 tons. Warehouse - not strict
prices about same
 - II war distressing - concern +
horror - threat in costs
emphasis on sources of supply
 - III Both mechanism - through former
aid funds -
 - IV International form of C
will agree to help educate

- Admiral Wagner -
- A) Warehouse - swaggers out of
Columbia - not only
done
 - B) Port of Columbia - provide
cutters? &
 - C) Salinemen of sea - can
don v.s. vessels -
"Supermarket" 500 The cost"
 - D) Pay money in this:

Part:

#1,000 - mile - judge let's see if
been not high up
zone - w/ which done - am I
accepted - willing adjust not
for recruitment.

MEMORANDUM

no? But we is directly related to supply

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 5, 1976

Discussion of problem fluctuations of supply

MEMORANDUM FOR: Jim Cannon
FROM: Dick Parsons
SUBJECT: Miami Trip -- Briefing Materials

Direct consultation between supply and use

Herewith, the background and briefing materials I promised.

Tab A covers general and specific (i.e., related to the Miami area) background.

*leg
Thompson
in Detroit*

Tab B contains some suggested talking points for your TV appearance (take what you need).

Tab C covers past statements of the President.

*20% of supply
remain*

Tab D gives additional background on marihuana. I am certain you will be "grilled" vigorously on this.

I hope this is helpful.

*1) What more needs to be done
a) New laws?
b) additional issues.*

*2 yr use have occurred
500-600,000 are hooked*



BACKGROUND CONCERNING ADMINISTRATION'S
DRUG PROGRAM

GENERAL

1. High priority has been given to the drug program over the past half decade, with total Federal expenditures growing from less than \$100 million to over three quarters of a billion dollars for a comprehensive program of prevention and treatment, law enforcement, and international control. Real progress was made, but by early 1975, it was clear that conditions were worsening and that gains of prior years were being eroded (actual "turn" was early 1974, but data lag delayed full recognition). For example, "street" availability of heroin measured by price and purity, was increasing. Waiting lists for treatment existed again, after almost having disappeared. Drug related deaths and drug related appearances in hospital emergency rooms were increasing. Drug related crimes were on the upsurge. *What % of cases passed as property crime is related to drugs?*
2. Deeply concerned about ¹⁹⁷⁵ this evidence of increasing availability and use of drugs, in April, President Ford directed a high priority review of the entire Federal effort in drug law enforcement, treatment and prevention, and international control. He asked for a frank assessment of the extent of the problem and for detailed recommendations for making the Federal program more effective. The resulting White Paper on Drug Abuse was released to the public in October and endorsed by the President (following receipt of formal Cabinet appraisals) on December 26. *MUCH*
3. The President's FY 1977 budget requests sufficient funds to implement all of the White Paper's major recommendations. For example, in line with White Paper recommendations, additional resources are provided for:
 - . the growing problem of amphetamine and barbiturate abuse. The White Paper concludes that chronic, intensive, and medically unsupervised use of amphetamines and barbiturates ranks just behind heroin abuse as a major social problem, affecting several hundred thousand Americans. To respond, the budget requests funds for treatment demonstrations for abusers of these substances, and provides 20 new positions within the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) for strengthened regulatory and compliance activities aimed at preventing diversion of amphetamines and barbiturates from licit production;
 - . additional community treatment capacity. Funds are included for the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to fund at least 7,000 new community treatment slots and to recover 1,000 lost to inflation, thus provided Federally-supported community-based capacity to treat 102,000 individuals at one time. In addition, other managerial actions will ensure greater utilization of existing community mental health institutions for drug users, and the treatment capacity of the Bureau of Prisons, the Veterans Administration, and the Department of Defense for their specialized clientele will be maintained;*work - call in drug company ops.*



BACKGROUND CONCERNING ADMINISTRATION'S
DRUG PROGRAM

GENERAL

1. High priority has been given to the drug program over the past half decade, with total Federal expenditures growing from less than \$100 million to over three quarters of a billion dollars for a comprehensive program of prevention and treatment, law enforcement, and international control. Real progress was made, but by early 1975, it was clear that conditions were worsening and that gains of prior years were being eroded (actual "turn" was early 1974, but data has delayed full recognition). For example, "street" availability of heroin measured by price and purity, was increasing. Waiting lists for treatment existed again, after almost having disappeared. Drug related deaths and drug related appearances in hospital emergency rooms were increasing. Drug related crimes were on the upsurge. With the evidence of continuing availability and use of drugs, in April, President Ford reached a high priority review of the entire Federal effort in law enforcement, treatment and prevention, and international, and international, and international assessment of the extent of the problem and the need for a frank assessment of the Federal program more broadly. The resulting White Paper on Drug Abuse was released on October 1, 1975, and endorsed by the President (following receipt of the White Paper) on December 26.

2. The President's FY 1977 budget request was submitted to Congress with White Paper recommendations, additional recommendations provided for the President's major recommendations. In line with White Paper recommendations, additional recommendations provided for:

The growing problem of amphetamines and barbiturates and the White Paper concludes that chronic, intensive, and supervised use of amphetamines and barbiturates ranks as a major social problem, affecting several hundred thousand Americans. To respond, the budget requests for treatment and demonstration for abusers of these substances (DEA) for positions within the Drug Enforcement Administration aimed at preventing diversion of amphetamines and barbiturates from their production.

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MUCH

3/2/76



Dr. [unclear] not up to speed
public policy
will
for
Comprehensive - growing
7
7

- . better targeting of law enforcement effort at high level traffickers. The Drug Enforcement Administration will add 82 positions for improved intelligence and laboratory analysis aimed at supporting the existing investigation and enforcement effort. In addition, research will be focused on improving our capability to monitor drug abuse trends, and on developing tools and techniques to improve the productivity of investigators and agents;

- . improve job opportunities for ex-addicts. Additional funds are provided for a joint HEW/Labor program to investigate ways to provide employment opportunities for persons in and completing treatment, so that the distressing situation of returning to the same conditions which led to drug use can be avoided. In addition, other managerial actions should ensure improved application of our vocational rehabilitation services to drug users.

What are chances of success?

4. These specific budget increases are relatively modest because it was the unanimous conclusion of the Task Force which prepared the White Paper that the most significant progress could be made in the drug program through (1) more selectivity and targeting in the use of the current \$750 million budget; (2) better intra- and inter-agency management; and (3) more effective mobilization, utilization, and coordination of all the resources available in the Federal Government, State and local governments, the private community and from foreign governments engaged in the worldwide effort to combat drug trafficking. In line with White Paper recommendations, existing resources are being retargeted to focus law enforcement efforts on high level drug traffickers and to ensure that treatment is available to those individuals suffering most from drug abuse. Other actions underway should ensure increased interface between the treatment and criminal justice systems to assure that apprehended drug users are identified and provided opportunities for treatment. In the area of inter-agency coordination, officers of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the U.S. Customs Service and their respective cabinet departments have prepared and signed joint "Memoranda of Understanding" identifying operating guidelines which should improve cooperation among them.

better use of money // better report

This is a big illegal business stop it drug business detect people from entering // I wish - how I see more

5. In the international area, the President has spoken personally to Presidents Echeverria of Mexico and Lopez-Michelsen of Colombia and with Prime Minister Demirel of Turkey in an effort to strengthen cooperation among all nations involved in the fight against illicit drug traffic. Attorney General Levi has recently discussed mutual drug control problems with the Attorney General of Mexico, and the President has directed Secretary of State Kissinger to express to the Mexican government his personal concern that we explore opportunities for improved control.

6. The President has also:

- . Directed the Domestic Council Drug Abuse Task Force which prepared the White Paper to reconvene and prepare recommendations for improving our ability to control drug trafficking along the southwest border.



||

- . Appointed Peter Bensinger to head the Drug Enforcement Administration. On February 23, the day Mr. Bensinger was sworn in, the President met with him to underscore the importance of his job, and said: "The appointment of Peter Bensinger as head of the Drug Enforcement Administration is one of the most important I have made as President, because of the critical mission of that agency. I believe we have found in Mr. Bensinger the right combination of proven experience, complete integrity and full commitment to public service."
- . Called on Congress to enact legislation which would impose mandatory prison sentences on those convicted of trafficking in hard drugs (December 26 and February 23).
- . Spoke forcefully about the drug abuse problem and his commitment to fighting it in Miami on February 14.
- . Answered questions in New Hampshire and Florida concerning marihuana decriminalization. He said that he opposes decriminalization as long as evidence on the health effects is controversial, but that he believes Federal efforts should be focused on traffickers.

*What is
No
of this
bri -
Let is
so all
ch.
2 min
Re
necessary*

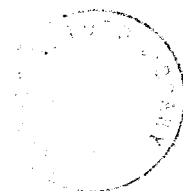
MIAMI SPECIFIC

1. The Federal Government spends \$9.1 million to provide drug abuse treatment capacity for 4,400 individuals at one time in Florida; \$5.0 million and 2,200 treatment "slots" are in Miami.
2. The Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime (TASC) program is a Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) funded program which attempts to interrupt the cycle of drug use, crime and incarceration by identifying drug abusers in the criminal justice system and both referring them to treatment and tracking their progress. The Miami program, which began in November, 1973, is one of the finest of the 36 such programs funded nationally, and the President praised it in his February 14 speech. Miami TASC has processed over 3,200 persons with a re-arrest rate of approximately five percent for those persons while on the TASC treatment program. This is many times below the expected re-arrest rate for drug involved offenders in the community.
3. The Miami Regional office of DEA has responsibility for the coastline from New Orleans to Charleston, South Carolina. It has ten district offices (5 in Florida) and there are 139 agents in the region. Most traffic is from South America and the Carribean Islands, with cocaine and marihuana predominating.
4. A very significant case was completed on March 19, 40 pounds of cocaine and \$15,000 in currency was seized, and five defendents were arrested.

*Break an
cycle of
habit
curri
juil
habit*



TAB "B"



TALKING POINTS

1. I am delighted to have this opportunity to talk about the Federal drug abuse program, one which the President considers among the most important and which is one of his highest personal priorities.
2. Drug abuse is one of the most serious and tragic problems the country faces. Its cost to the nation is staggering:
 - . Counting narcotics related crime, health care, drug program costs and addicts' lost productivity, estimates range upward of \$17 billion a year.
 - . In addition to these measurable costs, the nation bears an incalculable burden in terms of ruined lives, broken homes, and divided communities.
 - . It is also a major contributor to our growing crime rate. †
3. Commencing in 1969, the Federal Government launched a major commitment toward eliminating the drug abuse problem in America. Sufficient progress had been made by late 1973 that Administration spokesmen, including, the former President, began to make cautious statements about "turning the corner on drug abuse".
4. Sadly, we now know that the very real progress which led to this confidence was, in the main, temporary and regional. In fact, at that very time, the underlying trends had already begun to turn up after having declined steadily for almost two years.
5. Deeply concerned over evidence indicating an increase in the availability and use of illicit drugs, President Ford, in April, called for a thorough appraisal of the nature and extent of drug abuse in America today. The President directed the Domestic Council, under the leadership of the Vice President, to undertake a priority review of the overall Federal effort in the prevention and treatment of drug abuse, to give him a frank assessment of our effectiveness, and to make recommendations concerning ways to make the Federal drug abuse program more effective in the future. //
6. The resulting White Paper on Drug Abuse which was released in October, 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. It is an excellent document which addresses the problem squarely, and which avoids raising false hopes about this difficult area.

Common sense - Realistic



7. After receiving the formal recommendations of his Cabinet, the President endorsed the White Paper in December, and the budget he submitted to Congress requests funds to implement all of its major recommendations.

8. Since most drugs of abuse originate overseas, making international cooperation vital to reducing the availability of drugs here at home, the President has 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 those nations involved in the fight against illicit drug traffic. *personally*

9. He has also:

- . directed the Domestic Council Drug Abuse Task Force which prepared the White Paper to reconvene and prepare recommendations for improving our ability to control drug trafficking along the southwest border.

- . Appointed Peter Bensinger to head the Drug Enforcement Administration.

- . Called on Congress to enact legislation which would impose mandatory prison sentences on those convicted of trafficking in hard drugs (December 26 and February 23).

10. So, as you can see, we are acting vigorously at the Federal level. But, as the White Paper said, we must more effectively mobilize and utilize all the resources available in the Federal Government, State and local governments, and the private community.

- . Opportunities exist to more fully utilize the resources of the U.S. Customs Service and the FBI within an integrated Federal law enforcement program, and to utilize vocational rehabilitation services available in the Department of Labor as part of a comprehensive demand reduction program. *Reduce demand*

- . The Federal Government should take the lead in mobilizing the enormous potential resources available in State and local law enforcement agencies, and in State, local, and private prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation services.

11. Only through full utilization of all available resources, and close cooperation among all involved agencies, can we hope to reduce the extent of drug abuse in America.



*Such
Can we take a
pva or why
people start
taking drugs?*

TAB "C"

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Drug abuse is one of the most serious and tragic problems in this country. Its cost to the nation in terms of ruined lives, broken homes and divided communities is staggering. In addition to this toll, it is a major cause of crime.

Combatting this problem is a major priority of my Administration.

The appointment of Peter Bensinger as head of the Drug Enforcement Administration is one of the most important I have made as President, because of the critical mission of that agency. I believe we have found in Mr. Bensinger the right combination of proven experience, complete integrity and full commitment to public service.

The Drug Enforcement Administration is the agency principally responsible for Federal drug law enforcement. It has the often thankless task of seeking out and apprehending some of the cruelest criminals in the world -- those who traffic in hard drugs. This is a complex and difficult task. However, if we are to win the war on drugs, these merchants of tragedy and death must be stopped.

I have recommended that the Congress enact legislation which would impose mandatory prison sentences on those convicted of trafficking in hard drugs. I have also met with the leaders of Mexico, Turkey and Colombia, and with members of the United States Congress, to assure them of my full commitment to curbing the illicit traffic in drugs. I want to take this opportunity to pledge to the American people an all-out Federal effort to combat the drug menace.

#

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Miami, Florida)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
FEDERAL BAR ASSOCIATION DINNER
EVERGLADES HOTEL

PAGE 7 (excerpt)

The increasing abuse of hard drugs contributes to the soaring crime rate. In this case, our Federal responsibility is very, very clear. I have directed all Federal law enforcement agencies -- in particular, the Drug Enforcement Administration -- to intensify the drive against major narcotic traffickers.

I am seeking legislation and cooperation with the Congress for mandatory prison sentences for convicted traffickers in hard drugs. These merchants of death deserve nothing less.

Because the drug problem also involves other nations, I have had an opportunity in the last year and one half to consult with leaders of Mexico, Colombia and Turkey to urge stronger action by them in cooperation with us to control the production and the shipment of hard drugs.

I have also recommended to the Congress to increase Federal funds to get drug addicts into treatment and out of crime. Your own program right here in Miami, known as the Treatment Alternative to Street Crime, funded by LEAA, I think is an excellent example of this concept at work.

Programs that I have outlined here tonight are part of a Federal effort to combat crime. As long as crime is a national or nationwide problem, the Administration is determined to provide leadership and assistance in fighting it within our jurisdiction.

"The sale of hard drugs is on the increase again. I have directed all agencies of the Federal Government to step up enforcement efforts against those who deal in drugs. In 1975, Federal agents seized substantially more heroin coming into our country than in 1974.

"As President, I have talked personally with the leaders of Mexico, Colombia and Turkey to urge greater efforts by their Governments to control effectively the production and shipment of hard drugs.

"I recommended months ago that the Congress enact mandatory fixed sentences for persons convicted of Federal crimes involving the sale of hard drugs. Hard drugs degrade the spirit as they destroy the body of their users."

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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.

TAB "D"

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 13, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: MEMBERS OF THE DOMESTIC COUNCIL
DRUG ABUSE TASK FORCE

FROM: Dick Parsons

SUBJECT: Marihuana

Ambassador Vance, Commissioner Acree and other members of the Task Force have made all of us aware of the desirability of having a clear Presidential policy statement concerning marihuana. This is even more the case in light of the recent publicity this matter has received.

Last Sunday, the President had occasion to address this issue. Herewith, for your information and guidance, is the President's view:

"QUESTION: Mr. President, I was wondering how you feel about the illegal possession of marihuana?

"THE PRESIDENT: There is a great controversy in the scientific world as to whether or not the use to a substantial degree of marihuana is good or bad for a person's health. Until there is a higher degree of unanimity among the scientific world that marihuana is not harmful to the individual, I do not think we should decriminalize marihuana.

"I think that we should do as the White House Domestic Council review recommended; that we should concentrate our effort at the Federal level on hard drugs, the trafficker and the others [e.g. financiers].

"But, I re-emphasize, I do not believe in the decriminalization of marihuana under the present circumstances."

The President's statement is significant both because he clearly states his opposition to decriminalization of marihuana given the current controversy about its effects and because he expressly endorses the recommendation of the Domestic Council Drug Abuse Task Force that priority in Federal antinarcotics efforts be directed at those drugs which have the highest costs to society and to the user. * Of course, giving "priority" to hard drugs

* See, White Paper on Drug Abuse, pp. 29-34.

does not mean totally abandoning our efforts aimed at other, less harmful drugs. To quote the White Paper:

"This ranking does not mean that all efforts should be devoted to the high priority drugs, and none to others. Drug use is much too complicated and our knowledge too imprecise for that. Some attention must continue to be given to all drugs both to keep them from exploding into major problems and because there are individuals suffering severe medical problems from even a low priority drug, such as marihuana.

"However, when resource constraints force a choice, the choice should be made in favor of the higher priority drugs."

White Paper on Drug Abuse
pp. 33-4

I hope this is helpful to you.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 26, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: John Carlson
FROM: Dick Parsons
SUBJECT: Marihuana

You requested some additional guidance in terms of responding to press inquiries concerning the President's position on marihuana. Specifically, questions have been raised about the President's stand on decriminalization of marihuana in light of the recently released HEW report on Marihuana and Health.

As you know, the President has indicated that, until there is greater unanimity concerning the effects of marihuana on health, he will continue to oppose decriminalization of marihuana. In support of this position, I would cite the following facts:

Only since 1968 have we been able to synthesize the various chemical components of marihuana and make them available for study. In addition, finding appropriate human subjects on whom to study the effects of marihuana has been difficult. Lastly, the active ingredients in the marihuana plant per se are chemically complex and the reaction of the body's system is equally complex.

There are some things that we can definitively say about the acute effects of marihuana:

- Marihuana intoxication results in impaired memory, altered time sense and diminished ability to perform certain motor skills while intoxicated.
- This leads to the conclusion that both driving performance and learning are impaired by marihuana intoxication.
- The preponderance of use occurs with teenagers and young adults.

- Given these facts, it is appropriate to protect young people from marihuana intoxication. I doubt that anyone would argue that it is desirable for teenagers to be chronically intoxicated.

In terms of more long-term effects of marihuana use, we do not have good evidence on the impact of use on adolescents either physiologically or psychologically. We do not have definitive knowledge regarding the effect of marihuana use on the immune response or on other functions related to cellular reproduction and metabolism. Thus, there is much to be learned about long-term effects of marihuana use.

Marihuana is often compared to alcohol and tobacco. In releasing the Fifth Annual Report to the Congress on Marihuana and Health on February 12, 1976, Dr. Robert L. DuPont, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, responded to a press question regarding the relative health menace of the three drugs by saying that both alcohol and tobacco presented a greater health problem. However, this is not the same as saying that there are no problems associated with marihuana use. On the contrary, in summarizing the findings of the report, Dr. DuPont stated: "The evidence of marihuana intoxication shows it to present a clear and present danger; even with small dosage levels of marihuana, psycho motor performance is impaired." Dr. DuPont warned that such intoxication "can have dangerous consequences in such areas as traffic safety and industrial performance." He also added that "intellectual performance, and in particular immediate memory, are also impaired while under the influence of marihuana." He concluded his press statement by saying: "This should cause us all to rethink the consequences of increased marihuana use."

In summary, the safety of marihuana has in no way been established. In fact, we are clear on the detrimental effects of marihuana intoxication but unclear as to the long-term effects of its use, especially with young people, who seem to be the most likely users. We would be irresponsible, therefore, if we were to promote any policy at the Federal level which tends to make the drug more readily available or condones or encourages its use. The President believes that decriminalization would do just that.

cc: Jim Cannon