

Mrs. Reagan (142)

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WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL

JUNE 24, 1986

-- THANK YOU. AND BEFORE I GO ANY FURTHER LET ME TELL YOU THAT THE GREAT COMMUNICATOR SENDS HIS REGARDS.

-- I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW HONORED I FEEL TO BE SPEAKING BEFORE THE WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL. I KNOW OF THE GREAT LEADERS AND INTELLECTS WHO HAVE APPEARED IN THE PLACE WHERE I'M STANDING TODAY -- AND IT'S A LITTLE OVERWHELMING.

-- I CERTAINLY DON'T PUT MYSELF ON THEIR PLANE, BUT I BELIEVE WHAT I WANT TO DISCUSS WITH YOU IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS

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PAGE 2

ANYTHING PREVIOUS SPEAKERS HAVE DISCUSSED.

-- I WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE BATTLE AGAINST DRUGS.

-- NOW BEFORE ANY OF YOU CAN THINK TO YOURSELF, "WELL, DRUG ABUSE REALLY DOESN'T CONCERN ME," LET ME SAY IT DOES CONCERN YOU. IT CONCERNS YOU IF YOU HAVE A FAMILY, BECAUSE DRUGS CAN UNEXPECTEDLY TEAR A FAMILY TO PIECES -- EVEN THE MOST LOVING FAMILIES.

-- IT CONCERNS YOU AS AN EMPLOYER, BECAUSE DRUGS COST BILLIONS IN ILLNESS, ACCIDENTS, LOST PRODUCTIVITY AND CORRUPTION.

-- IT CONCERNS YOU AS CITIZEN, BECAUSE THERE'S A DIRECT AND UNDENIABLE LINK BETWEEN CRIME AND DRUGS. LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ARE BEING MURDERED IN THEIR EFFORTS TO PROTECT OUR SOCIETY FROM THOSE WHO WOULD DESTROY IT WITH DRUGS.

-- AND FURTHERMORE, IT CONCERNS YOU AS AN INDIVIDUAL OF CONSCIENCE, BECAUSE THE TRAGEDY AND PAIN DRUGS CAUSE ARE STAGGERING.

-- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THERE'S A DRUG AND ALCOHOL EPIDEMIC IN THIS COUNTRY AND NO ONE IS SAFE FROM ITS CONSEQUENCES -- NOT YOU, NOT ME, AND CERTAINLY NOT OUR CHILDREN. DRUGS ARE A VERY

POWERFUL FORCE IN AMERICA, AND WE CANNOT IGNORE THEM.

-- LET ME BEGIN BY TAKING YOU BACK, IF I MAY, AND TELLING YOU OF MY PERSONAL JOURNEY OF AWARENESS AND COMMITMENT IN REGARD TO DRUG ABUSE...BECAUSE IN MANY WAYS MY JOURNEY REFLECTS THAT OF THE NATION AS A WHOLE.

-- I FIRST BECAME AWARE OF THE PROBLEM IN THE 60'S IN SACRAMENTO WHEN MY HUSBAND WAS GOVERNOR. TO BE HONEST, I REALLY DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THE SCOPE OR THE INTENSITY OF THE PROBLEM THEN. FEW OF US DID. BUT I KNEW SOMETHING WAS HAPPENING TO OUR CHILDREN,

SOMETHING VERY TRAGIC -- EVEN DEADLY.

-- I BEGAN GETTING CALLS FROM FRIENDS -- CALLS OF HURT AND EMBARRASSMENT AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS THAT THEIR CHILD COULD BE ON DRUGS -- CALLS OF CONFUSION AND IGNORANCE ABOUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO THEIR FAMILY, AND ON OCCASION CALLS OF GREAT PAIN AT THE LOSS OF A SON OR DAUGHTER.

-- WE WERE ALL SO NAIVE THEN.

-- TRYING TO RAISE CHILDREN IN THE 60'S WAS A TERRIFYING EXPERIENCE. IT SEEMED EVERYTHING WAS AGAINST YOU -- MAINLY YOUR

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CHILDREN. IT WAS OFTEN HARD -- AND STILL IS -- TO TELL THE SIGNS OF DRUG ABUSE FROM NORMAL ADOLESCENT REBELLION. PARENTS DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO TURN, DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

-- IN THE MOVIE, "THE DARK AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS," A WOMAN SAYS OF HER CHILDREN, "I ALWAYS WANTED TO GIVE THEM LIFE LIKE A PRESENT, ALL WRAPPED UP WITH EVERY PROMISE OF HAPPINESS." THIS IS WHAT EVERY PARENT WANTS FOR A CHILD, BUT IT WAS BECOMING PAINFULLY OBVIOUS, THIS WASN'T THE WAY IT WAS TO BE.

-- AS TIME WENT ON, I GOT MORE CALLS. I BEGAN READING A

LITTLE MORE ABOUT IT IN THE PAPERS. THE AGE OF THE CHILDREN INVOLVED SEEMED TO BE GETTING YOUNGER AND YOUNGER. CLEARLY, WE HAD THE MAKINGS OF A TREMENDOUS PROBLEM.

-- THEN WHEN WE MOVED TO WASHINGTON I LEARNED SOMETHING. I LEARNED I HAD A CHANCE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. I HAD A PLATFORM I WOULD NEVER HAVE AGAIN AND I SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT. BEFORE I EVEN GOT STARTED THOUGH, MARCH 30TH AND THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION HAPPENED -- OBVIOUSLY MY WORLD STOPPED. BUT DURING THE RECUPERATION PERIOD, I MET WITH DOCTORS, TEACHERS, AND EXPERTS IN

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THE FIELD OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE. FOR THE FIRST TIME, I BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND THE FULL FRIGHTENING EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM.

-- YET ALL THE STATISTICS, ALL THE CLINICAL STUDIES, ALL THE EXPERT BRIEFINGS IN THE WORLD CAN'T MATCH THE REALITY OF ONE DEEPLY SUFFERING YOUNG PERSON. WHEN PEOPLE LEARNED I WAS INTERESTED IN DRUG ABUSE, I BEGAN GETTING LETTERS THAT WOULD SIMPLY PIERCE YOUR HEART, LETTERS OF PAIN AND LONELINESS AND CONFUSION -- THOUSANDS OF THEM.

-- IN THE BEGINNING, I GOT A LETTER FROM A 16 YEAR-OLD GIRL

I'LL CALL JONI. I WANT TO READ IT TO YOU. PART OF IT'S RATHER RAW, BUT THIS LETTER TELLS YOU WHAT DRUGS CAN DO AND TELLS IT BETTER THAN ALL THE FACTS AND FIGURES I COULD PRESENT.

-- "DEAR MRS. REAGAN, IT HAS TAKEN ME MANY MONTHS TO FINALLY WRITE YOU. AT THE AGE OF 13 I WAS A REGULAR USER OF ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING -- POT, LSD, HEROIN, EVEN NAIL POLISH REMOVER, AND IF I WAS REALLY DESPERATE, LIQUID PAPER. I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHY I BECAME A DRUG USER, I GUESS BECAUSE I NEVER REALLY LIKED MYSELF, AND NOW I HATE MYSELF EVEN MORE.

-- I DESTROYED MY PARENTS HEARTS. OUT OF THREE BOYS, THEY THOUGHT THEIR ONE AND ONLY LITTLE GIRL WOULD FOLLOW THEIR FOOT-STEPS AND BE A GOOD GIRL. I FAILED THEM...I HURT THEM. BECAUSE OF WHAT I'VE DONE, DRUGS HAVE NOW AFFECTED MY SOCIAL AND FAMILY LIFE--I'M A LONER, AND IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF DRUGS.

-- IT GOT TO THE POINT WHERE I WAS HIGH ALL THE TIME...FOR ME, DRUGS WERE THE ESCAPE FROM REALITY...TO TOP IT OFF, I WAS ADOPTED AS A BABY, AND WHEN I FOUND OUT I WAS DIFFERENT, I NEVER WANTED TO BE IN THE REAL WORLD.

-- DRUGS ARE TERRIBLE, AND IT WAS A HORRIBLE, VICIOUS CYCLE I LIVED IN -- DRUGS TOOK ME OVER. I CAN REMEMBER ONE TIME WHEN I WAS HIGH I NEEDED A FIX SO BAD, I HAD SEX WITH A MAN AROUND 55 YEARS OR OLDER. FOR FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS WORTH OF DRUGS, IT WAS WORTH IT AT THE TIME. I WAS ONCE PREGNANT, BUT BECAUSE OF THE DRUGS, I HAD THE BABY WHEN IT WAS FIVE MONTHS INTO MY PREGNANCY -- THE BABY'S ARM WAS AT ITS LEG AND ITS EAR WAS AT ITS CHEEK -- THE BABY DIED.

-- DRUGS RUINED MY LIFE, AND I REGRET IT SO MUCH. I LONG FOR THE DAY WHEN ANYONE WILL SAY TO ME, 'JONI, I LOVE YOU --

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BECAUSE OF WHO YOU ARE, NOT WHO YOU WERE.' ... MRS. REAGAN -- PLEASE REACH KIDS MY AGE AND YOUNGER -- DON'T LET WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME AND WHICH DESTROYED MY LIFE HAPPEN TO THEM."

-- HOW COULD ANYONE RESIST SUCH A PLEA? BUT I REALIZED OUR CHILDREN'S PLEAS WEREN'T GETTING THROUGH TO US. IN FACT, THE WHOLE PROBLEM OF DRUG ABUSE WAS BEING DENIED. FOR TOO LONG OUR NATION DENIED THAT A PROBLEM EVEN EXISTED. WE DENIED THAT DRUG ABUSE HAD HEALTH AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES. WE DENIED THAT ANYTHING COULD BE DONE TO COUNTER WIDESPREAD DRUG USE.

-- THERE WAS ALMOST A STIGMA IN TRYING TO TAKE ON DRUGS. IT WAS UNFASHIONABLE. IT WAS ILLIBERAL AND NARROW-MINDED IN OUR LIVE-AND-LET-LIVE SOCIETY. MOVIES AND TELEVISION PORTRAYED DRUGS AS GLAMOROUS AND COOL. WE HEARD A LOT ABOUT THE RECREATIONAL USE OF DRUGS AS IF DRUGS WERE AS HARMLESS AS TRIVIAL PURSUIT. EVEN LAW ENFORCEMENT WAS WEAKENED BY THE MORAL CONFUSION SURROUNDING DRUG ABUSE. IT WAS AS IF ALL THE PEOPLE WHO SOUGHT TO FIGHT DRUGS HAD TO JUSTIFY THEIR ACTIONS. AS A MATTER OF FACT, NO ONE WAS ESPECIALLY THRILLED AT THE IDEA THAT THIS WAS WHAT I WANTED TO DO.

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-- YET FOR FIVE YEARS NOW I'VE BEEN TROOPING AROUND THIS COUNTRY AND THE WORLD -- OVER 100,000 MILES, 53 CITIES IN 28 STATES, 6 FOREIGN COUNTRIES, AND COUNTLESS INTERVIEWS AND TELEVISION APPEARANCES. MY MAIN PURPOSE WHEN WE STARTED, WAS TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS IN THE COUNTRY AND TO STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF BECOMING KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THE DANGER OF DRUG ABUSE.

-- I THINK WE'VE SUCCEEDED IN THAT. I CERTAINLY SEE MORE ABOUT DRUG ABUSE IN THE PAPERS AND ON TELEVISION. MORE WELL-KNOWN PEOPLE ARE COMING FORWARD AND TALKING ABOUT THEIR ADDICTION.



SLOWLY, THE WALL OF DENIAL SEEMS TO BE CRUMBLING.

-- WE NOW HAVE 9,000 PARENT GROUPS, WHICH SPRANG UP INDEPENDENTLY AND ARE DOING MARVELOUS WORK IN CLOSING DOWN HEADSHOPS, BECOMING INVOLVED IN SCHOOL DRUG PROGRAMS, AND FORMING SUPPORT GROUPS FOR ONE ANOTHER.

-- I ALWAYS THOUGHT IF WE COULD JUST GET THE YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED IT WOULD BE A GIANT STEP FORWARD. AND NOW THAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE "JUST SAY NO" CLUBS. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE FORMING THEIR OWN POSITIVE PEER GROUPS TO COUNTER THE PRESSURES TO USE DRUGS. IT'S

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SOMETIMES HARD TO BELIEVE HOW COMPLEX OUR CHILDREN'S LIVES ARE TODAY -- IN MY DAY PEER PRESSURE MEANT YOUR SADDLE SHOES HAD TO BE DIRTY.

-- INTERNATIONALLY, WE'RE ALSO MAKING PROGRESS. I'VE TWICE INVITED THE FIRST LADIES OF OTHER COUNTRIES HERE TO DISCUSS THE DRUG ABUSE PROBLEM AND TO LET THEM HEAR FROM EXPERTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE FORMER ADDICTS. THE NUMBERS OF THESE CONCERNED FIRST LADIES IS RAPIDLY GROWING AND THEIR INFLUENCE IS BEING FELT AROUND THE WORLD. THE FIRST TIME WE HAD 17 ACCEPTANCES, THE SECOND

THE SECOND TIME WE HAD 30 ACCEPTANCES.

-- I FEEL VERY GOOD THAT WE'VE SUCCEEDED IN RAISING THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS. WE AMERICANS ARE MORE AWARE OF DRUG ABUSE THAN EVER BEFORE -- BUT NOW IT'S TIME FOR THE NEXT STEP.

-- IT'S TIME TO LET PEOPLE KNOW THEY HAVE A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO DO MORE THAN SIMPLY RECOGNIZE THE PROBLEM. THEY HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO TAKE A PERSONAL STAND AGAINST DRUGS.

-- YOU KNOW, ONE YOUNG GIRL WROTE TO ME ABOUT HER BROTHER, WHO HAD HELPED RAISE HER. SHE STILL LOVED HIM DESPITE THE FACT

HE'D BECOME SO POSSESSED BY DRUGS HE'D EVEN THREATENED TO KILL THEM BOTH. SHE WROTE, "ONE DAY HE WAS SO DRUGGED UP THAT HE COULDN'T WALK, HE SAT ON A STEP AND GAVE ME A LOOK OF 'HELP ME' STRAIGHT IN THE EYES. I STARTED TO CRY. LATER THAT NIGHT WE FOUND OUT HE OVERDOSED ON HEROIN... HE HURT ME SO BAD, BUT NEVER BAD ENOUGH THAT I HATED HIM. I LOVE HIM MORE THAN ANYONE KNOWS..." AT THE BOTTOM OF HER LETTER IN LARGE PLAINTIVE LETTERS SHE WROTE, "HELP!"

-- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, EACH OF YOU HAS A MORAL OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE THAT HELP. I DON'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO WORK IN A DRUG

REHABILITATION CENTER OR JOIN A PARENTS GROUP. BUT YOU DO HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PUT YOUR CONSCIENCE AND PRINCIPLES ON THE LINE. YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BE INTOLERANT OF DRUG USE ANYWHERE-ANYTIME BY ANYBODY. YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FORCING THE ISSUE TO THE POINT OF MAKING OTHERS UNCOMFORTABLE AND YOURSELF UNPOPULAR.

-- RECENTLY, I WAS INTERVIEWED BY A MAGAZINE REPORTER WHO TOLD ME OF A DINNER SHE'D ATTENDED WHERE COCAINE WAS PASSED AROUND. SHE FELT UNCOMFORTABLE, BUT SHE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING.

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WELL, SHE SHOULD HAVE. SHE SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN UP FROM THE TABLE, TOLD THE PEOPLE WHAT SHE THOUGHT, AND LEFT. BY STAYING SHE GAVE TACIT APPROVAL.

-- A SPORTS BROADCASTER TOLD ME HE WAS HAVING DINNER WITH A GROUP OF PEOPLE AT A WELL-KNOWN RESTAURANT AND THE SAME THING HAPPENED. OUT CAME A BOWL OF COCAINE. WHAT SHOULD HE HAVE DONE? HE SHOULD HAVE PULLED TOGETHER THE COURAGE -- AND IT WOULD TAKE COURAGE -- AND SPOKEN AGAINST WHAT WAS GOING ON AND THEN LEFT.

-- IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, THIS WILL COST YOU SOME FRIENDS. BUT

IF A FRIENDSHIP IS BASED ON NOTHING MORE THAN CONDONING DRUGS,  
IT'S NOT MUCH OF A FRIENDSHIP ANYWAY. THIS IS A MORAL ISSUE AND  
YOU HAVE TO MAKE A DECISION. BY ACCEPTING DRUG USE YOU ARE  
ACCEPTING A PRACTICE THAT IS DESTROYING LIVES. YOU CANNOT SEPARATE  
POLITE DRUG USE AT A CHIC L.A. PARTY FROM DRUG USE AT A RUNDOWN,  
SHOOTING GALLERY IN WATTS. THEY ARE MORALLY EQUAL.

-- THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS AREN'T  
HURTING ANYONE BUT THEMSELVES ARE WRONG. DRUGS HURT SOCIETY. THE  
MONEY SPENT ON DRUGS GOES INTO THE HANDS OF ONE OF THE MOST

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RUTHLESS, DESPICABLE LOTS EVER TO BREATHE -- THE DRUG PRODUCERS.  
THEY ARE OFTEN MURDERERS. THEY ARE SOMETIMES TERRORISTS. THEY ARE  
ALWAYS CRIMINALS. THEY REPRESENT MAN AT HIS MOST DEBASED. THEY  
ARE THE PEOPLE WHO ARE FINANCING THE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION OF OUR  
YOUNG PEOPLE.

-- AND BY DOING NOTHING WHEN YOU KNOW OF DRUG USE, YOU'RE  
CONSPIRING WITH THEM AS THEY LINE THEIR POCKETS WITH EVEN MORE  
BLOOD MONEY.

-- I HAVE A MESSAGE FOR THE DRUG DEALERS AND PRODUCERS AND

PUSHERS, AND THE MESSAGE IS THIS: THE PARENTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD ARE GOING TO DRIVE YOU OUT OF BUSINESS. WE'RE THE ONES WHO ARE GOING TO BE THE PUSHERS FROM NOW ON. WE'RE GOING TO PUSH YOU OUT. PUSH YOU OUT OF OUR SCHOOLS, OUT OF OUR NEIGHBORHOODS, OUT OF OUR COMMUNITIES, AND OUT OF EXISTENCE!

-- THERE'S NOTHING REMARKABLE ABOUT HOW WE'LL DO IT. WE'LL DO IT THROUGH EDUCATION AND COMMITMENT. WE'LL DO IT THROUGH INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY. WE'RE GOING TO DRY UP THE DEALERS' MARKETS. WE'RE GOING TO MAKE THE POISON THEY PUSH AS WORTHLESS AS

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THEY ARE. WE'RE GOING TO TAKE THE CUSTOMER AWAY FROM THE PRODUCT.

-- SCHOOLS, TOO, HAVE TO FACE UP TO THEIR RESPONSIBILITY. THEY OWE OUR CHILDREN A DRUG-FREE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO GROW AND LEARN. I DON'T BELIEVE MOST SCHOOLS HAVE MADE THIS COMMITMENT BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE DRUG ABUSE IS SOCIETY'S PROBLEM. YET SCHOOLS CAN BE MADE CLEAN WITH A NO-NONSENSE APPROACH THAT SIMPLY SAYS DRUGS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. SUCH TOUGH MEASURES HAVE PROVEN SUCCESSFUL TIME AND AGAIN.

-- SCHOOLS NEED TO SET UP UNCOMPROMISING NO-DRUG, NO-ALCOHOL

POLICIES, LIKE NORTHSIDE HIGH SCHOOL IN ATLANTA. EACH SCHOOL NEEDS TO FIND AND DEVELOP ITS OWN TOUGH POLICIES.

-- CORPORATIONS HAVE TO TAKE GREATER RESPONSIBILITY, TOO. EMPLOYEES HAVE A RIGHT TO A DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE. WORKERS ON DRUGS ARE A DANGER TO FELLOW EMPLOYEES AND TO THE PUBLIC. TOO MANY COMPANIES DON'T KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH DRUGS, SO LIKE CERTAIN PARENTS AND SCHOOLS THEY PRETEND IT'S NOT A PROBLEM. WELL, ALL THE RESEARCH TELLS US IT IS A PROBLEM, AND CORPORATIONS NEED TO SET UP THEIR OWN TOUGH NO-DRUG POLICIES.

-- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, YOU ARE FORTUNATE. YOU'RE NOT AS VULNERABLE AS THE 12 OR 13 YEAR-OLD, WHO HAS SOME DRINKS, WHICH LOWERS HIS INHIBITIONS, SO HE TAKES A PILL OR A SNORT TO BE ACCEPTED BY HIS PEERS. AND THEN HE TAKES MORE DRUGS, MORE FREQUENTLY.

-- YOU ARE ACCOMPLISHED PEOPLE. YOU STRIVE. YOU ACHIEVE. YOU ENJOY. YOU GROW. YOU LOOK FORWARD. YOU'RE OPEN TO LIFE AND TO ITS HOPES.

-- CAN YOU IMAGINE BEING YOUNG AND YET WITHOUT THE SPARK AND

ENTHUSIASM OF YOUTH? CAN YOU IMAGINE BEING YOUNG AND YET AN EMPTY SHELL OF VACANT STARES, VACANT EMOTIONS, AND VACANT HOPES? CAN YOU IMAGINE NOT CARING ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS ENTIRE WORLD EXCEPT THE CHEMICAL YOU'RE GOING TO FORCE INTO YOUR BODY? THAT IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE YOUNG AND POSSESSED BY DRUGS.

-- YOU HAVE A MORAL DUTY TO PREVENT THIS LOSS. YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BE INTOLERANT OF DRUGS AND TO BE FORCEFUL IN YOUR INTOLERANCE. YOU HAVE THE OBLIGATION TO REMEMBER THE WORDS OF WHITTIER, WHO UNWITTINGLY EXPLAINED THE ESSENTIAL TRAGEDY OF

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DRUG ABUSE AMONG OUR YOUNG:

"FOR OF ALL THE SAD WORDS OF TONGUE OR PEN, THE SADDEST ARE THESE: IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN."

-- THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY.

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Mrs. Reagan's Remarks  
World Affairs Council  
Century Plaza Hotel

June 24, 1986

-- Thank you. And before I go any further let me tell you that the great communicator sends his regards.

-- I can't tell you how honored I feel to be speaking before the World Affairs Council. I know of the great leaders and intellectuals who have appeared in the place where I'm standing today - and it's a little overwhelming.

-- I certainly don't put myself on their plane, but I believe what I want to discuss with you is just as important as anything previous speakers have discussed.

-- I want to talk about the battle against drugs.

-- Now before any of you can think to yourself, "Well, drug abuse really doesn't concern me," let me say it does concern you. It concerns you if you have a family, because drugs can unexpectedly tear a family to pieces - even the most loving families.

-- It concerns you as an employer, because drugs cost billions in illness, accidents, lost productivity and corruption.

-- It concerns you as a citizen, because there's a direct and undeniable link between crime and drugs. Law enforcement officers are being murdered in their efforts to protect our society from those who would destroy it with drugs.

-- And furthermore, it concerns you as an individual of conscience, because the tragedy and pain drugs cause are staggering.



-- Ladies and gentlemen, there's a drug and alcohol epidemic in this country and no one is safe from its consequences -- not you, not me, and certainly not our children. Drugs are a very powerful force in America, and we cannot ignore them.

-- Let me begin by taking you back, if I may, and telling you of my personal journey of awareness and commitment in regard to drug abuse...because in many ways my journey reflects that of the nation as a whole.

-- I first became aware of the problem in the 60's in Sacramento when my husband was Governor. To be honest, I really didn't understand the scope or the intensity of the problem then. Few of us did. But I knew something was happening to our children, something very tragic - even deadly.

-- I began getting calls from friends - calls of hurt and embarrassment and self-consciousness that their child could be on drugs - calls of confusion and ignorance about what was happening to their family, and on occasion calls of great pain at the loss of a son or daughter.

-- We were all so naive then.

-- Trying to raise children in the 60's was a terrifying experience. It seemed everything was against you - mainly your children. It was often hard - and still is - to tell the signs of drug abuse from normal adolescent rebellion. Parents didn't know where to turn, didn't know what to do.

Mrs. Reagan's Remarks  
World Affairs Council  
Page Three

-- In the movie, "The Dark at the Top of the Stairs," a woman says of her children, "I always wanted to give them life like a present, all wrapped up with every promise of happiness." This is what every parent wants for a child, but it was becoming painfully obvious, this wasn't the way it was to be.

-- As time went on, I got more calls. I began reading a little more about it in the papers. The age of the children involved seemed to be getting younger and younger. Clearly, we had the makings of a tremendous problem.

-- Then when we moved to Washington I learned something. I learned I had a chance to make a difference. I had a platform I would never have again and I should take advantage of it. Before I even got started though, March 30th and the attempted assassination happened -- obviously my world stopped. But during the recuperation period, I met with doctors, teachers, and experts in the field of drug and alcohol abuse. For the first time, I began to understand the full frightening extent of the problem.

-- Yet all the statistics, all the clinical studies, all the expert briefings in the world can't match the reality of one deeply suffering young person. When people learned I was interested in drug abuse, I began getting letters that would simply pierce your heart, letters of pain and loneliness and confusion - thousands of them.

Mrs. Reagan's Remarks  
World Affairs Council  
Page Four

- In the beginning, I got a letter from a 16 year-old girl I'll call Joni. I want to read it to you. Part of it's rather raw, but this letter tells you what drugs can do and tells it better than all the facts and figures I could present.
- "Dear Mrs. Reagan, it has taken me many months to finally write you. At the age of 13 I was a regular user of anything and everything - pot, LSD, heroin, even nail polish remover, and if I was really desperate, liquid paper. I really don't know why I became a drug user, I guess because I never really liked myself, and now I hate myself even more.
- I destroyed my parents hearts. Out of three boys, they thought their one and only little girl would follow their footsteps and be a good girl. I failed them...I hurt them. Because of what I've done, drugs have now affected my social and family life - I'm a loner, and it's all because of drugs.
- It got to the point where I was high all the time...for me, drugs were the escape from reality...to top it off, I was adopted as a baby, and when I found out I was different, I never wanted to be in the real world.
- Drugs are terrible, and it was a horrible, vicious cycle I lived in - drugs took me over. I can remember one time when I was high I needed a fix so bad, I had sex with a man around 55 years or older. For five hundred dollars worth of drugs, it was worth it at the time. I was once pregnant, but because of the drugs, I had the baby when it was five months into my pregnancy -

the baby's arm was at its leg and its ear was at its cheek - the baby died.

-- Drugs ruined my life, and I regret it so much. I long for the day when anyone will say to me, 'Joni, I love you - because of who you are, not who you were.'...Mrs. Reagan - please reach kids my age and younger - don't let what's happened to me and which destroyed my life happen to them."

-- How could anyone resist such a plea? But I realized our children's pleas weren't getting through to us. In fact, the whole problem of drug abuse was being denied. For too long our nation denied that a problem even existed. We denied that drug abuse had health and social consequences. We denied that anything could be done to counter widespread drug use.

-- There was almost a stigma in trying to take on drugs. It was unfashionable. It was illiberal and narrow-minded in our live-and-let-live society. Movies and television portrayed drugs as glamorous and cool. We heard a lot about the recreational use of drugs as if drugs were as harmless as Trivial Pursuit. Even law enforcement was weakened by the moral confusion surrounding drug abuse. It was as if all the people who sought to fight drugs had to justify their actions. As a matter of fact, no one was especially thrilled at the idea that this was what I wanted to do. And we had a lot of conversations about it.

-- Yet for five years now I've been trooping around this country and the world - over 100,000 miles, 53 cities in 28 states, 6

foreign countries, and countless interviews and television appearances. My main purpose when we started, was to raise the level of awareness in the country and to stress the importance of becoming knowledgeable about the danger of drug abuse.

-- I think we've succeeded in that. I certainly see more about drug abuse in the papers and on television. More well-known people are coming forward and talking about their addiction. Slowly, the wall of denial seems to be crumbling.

-- We now have 9,000 parent groups, which sprang up independently and are doing marvelous work in closing down headshops, becoming involved in school drug programs, and forming support groups for one another.

-- I always thought if we could just get the young people involved it would be a giant step forward. And now that's happening with the "Just Say No" clubs. Young people are forming their own positive peer groups to counter the pressures to use drugs. It's sometimes hard to believe how complex our children's lives are today - in my day peer pressure meant your saddle shoes had to be dirty.

-- Internationally, we're also making progress. I've twice invited the First Ladies of other countries here to discuss the drug abuse problem and to let them hear from experts and young people who are former addicts. The numbers of these concerned First Ladies is rapidly growing and their influence is being felt around the world. The first time we had 17 acceptances, the

second time we had 30 acceptances. I was very gratified to learn that as a result of those meetings there are now parents groups in Germany, Portugal, Malaysia, Ireland, and Thailand.

Hopefully, these will grow even more.

-- I feel very good that we've succeeded in raising the level of awareness. We are more aware of drug abuse than ever before - but now it's time for the next step.

-- It's time to let people know they have a moral responsibility to do more than simply recognize the problem. They have an obligation to take a personal stand against drugs.

-- You know, one young girl wrote to me about her brother, who had helped raise her. She still loved him despite the fact he'd become so possessed by drugs he's even threatened to kill them both. She wrote, "one day he was so drugged up that he couldn't walk, he sat on a step and gave me a look of 'help me' straight in the eyes. I started to cry. Later that night we found out he overdosed on heroin...He hurt me so bad, but never bad enough that I hated him. I love him more than anyone knows..." At the bottom of her letter in large plaintive letters she wrote, "Help!"

-- Ladies and gentlemen, each of you has a moral obligation to provide that help. I don't mean you have to work in a drug rehabilitation center or join a parents group. But you do have the responsibility to put your conscience and principles on the line. You have the responsibility to be intolerant of drug use

anywhere-anytime by anybody. You have the responsibility of forcing the issue to the point of making others uncomfortable and yourself unpopular.

-- Recently, I was interviewed by a magazine reporter who told me of a dinner she'd attended where cocaine was passed around. She felt uncomfortable, but she didn't do anything. Well, she should have. She should have gotten up from the table, told the people what she thought, and left. By staying she gave tacit approval.

-- A sports broadcaster told me he was having dinner with a group of people at a well-known restaurant and the same thing happened - out came a bowl of cocaine. What should he have done? He should have pulled together the courage - and it would take courage - and spoken against what was going on and then left.

-- In all likelihood, this will cost you some friends, But if a friendship is based on nothing more than condoning drugs, it's not much of a friendship anyway. This is a moral issue and you have to make a decision. By accepting drug use you are accepting a practice that is destroying lives. You cannot separate polite drug use at a chic L.A. party from drug use in some back alley somewhere. They are morally equal.

-- Those who believe that people who use drugs aren't hurting anyone but themselves are wrong. Drugs hurt society. The money spent on drugs goes into the hands of one of the most ruthless, despicable lots ever to breathe - the drug producers. They are often murderers. They are sometimes terrorists. They are always

criminals. They represent man at his most debased. They are the people who are financing the death and destruction of our young people.

-- And by doing nothing when you know of drug use, you're conspiring with them as they line their pockets with even more blood money.

-- I have a message for the drug dealers and producers and pushers, and the message is this: The parents throughout the world are going to drive you out of business. We're the ones who are going to be the pushers from now on. We're going to push you out. Push you out of our schools, out of our neighborhoods, out of our communities, and out of existence!

-- There's nothing remarkable about how we'll do it. We'll do it through education and commitment. We'll do it through individual responsibility. We're going to dry up the dealers' markets. We're going to make the poison they push as worthless as they are. We're going to take the customer away from the product.

-- Schools, too, have to face up to their responsibility. They owe our children a drug-free environment in which to grow and learn. I think there are schools who haven't made this 

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commitment because they believe drug abuse is society's problem. Yet schools can be made clean with a no-nonsense approach that simply says drugs will not be tolerated. Such tough measures have proven successful time and again.



-- Schools need to set up uncompromising no-drug, no-alcohol policies, like Northside High School in Atlanta. Each school needs to find and develop its own tough policies.

-- Corporations have to take greater responsibility, too. Employees have a right to a drug-free workplace. Workers on drugs are a danger to fellow employees and to the public. Too many companies don't know how to deal with drugs, so like certain parents and schools they pretend it's not a problem. Well, all the research tells us it is a problem, and corporations need to set up their own tough no-drug policies. Roger Smith, Chairman of General Motors, has said that drug and alcohol abuse was costing the corporation a billion dollars a year.

-- Ladies and gentleman, you are fortunate. You're not as vulnerable as the 12 or 13 year-old, who has some drinks, which lowers his inhibitions, so he takes a pill or a snort to be accepted by his peers. And then he takes more drugs, more frequently.

-- You are accomplished people. You strive. You achieve. You enjoy. You grow. You look forward. You're open to life and to its hopes.

-- Can you imagine being young and yet without the spark and enthusiasm of youth? Can you imagine being young and yet an empty shell of vacant stares, vacant emotions, and vacant hopes? Can you imagine not caring about anything in this entire world except the chemical you're going to force into your body? That

Mrs. Reagan's Remarks  
World Affairs Council  
Page Eleven

is what it means to be young and possessed by drugs.

-- You have a moral duty to prevent this loss. You have the responsibility to be intolerant of drugs and to be forceful in your intolerance. You have the obligation to remember the words of Whittier, who unwittingly explained the essential tragedy of drug abuse among our young:

"For of all the sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: It might have been."

-- Thank you for inviting me and thank you for your hospitality.

# # #

File  
my  
Reason  
Sub Folder  
World Affairs  
Council  
June 24/1986

QUESTION: MY CHILD IS INTO DRUGS. WHAT DO I DO?

ANSWER: YOU MUST DO SOMETHING IMMEDIATELY. TALK TO YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR. SEEK OUT PARENTS WHO HAVE THE SAME PROBLEM. GET IN TOUCH WITH A LOCAL PARENT GROUP OR CALL A COUNSELING HOTLINE. THEN FIND A RECOMMENDED TREATMENT PROGRAM TO HELP YOUR CHILD.

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION TO HELP YOUR CHILD REBUILD A HEALTHY AND HAPPY LIFE, AND THE FIRST STEP WILL BE TO GET YOUR CHILD AWAY FROM THE DRUGS AND AWAY FROM THE SO-CALLED FRIENDS AND LIFESTYLE THAT GO WITH THE DRUGS. AND DON'T QUIT UNTIL YOU'VE FOUND A SOLUTION.

THEN I HOPE YOU WILL HELP OTHER PARENTS WHO ARE FACED WITH THE HEARTACHE OF A CHILD WHO IS INTO DRUGS.

QUESTION: ARE YOU SEEING CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR YOUR INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS?

ANSWER: IT'S AMAZING WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT HAS BEEN FORTHCOMING.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF SHOPPING CENTERS, WITH 17,000 MEMBERS IN 44 COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD, WILL TAKE DRUG ABUSE AS ONE OF ITS CENTRAL THEMES IN 1986-87; AND DRUG ABUSE WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF A MAJOR ADDRESS AT THEIR ANNUAL MEETING IN RIO DE JANEIRO IN AUGUST.

SO I AM VERY PLEASED WITH THE SUPPORT THE INTERNATIONAL EFFORT IS GETTING. AND I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING MORE AND MORE DONE IN THIS AREA.

QUESTION: ARE THE UNIFORMED POLICE IN NEW YORK ENCOURAGED OR ALLOWED TO MAKE DRUG ARRESTS?

ANSWER: OF COURSE, THE NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY IS THAT ALL OFFICERS ARE TO TAKE IMMEDIATE AND APPROPRIATE ACTION, INCLUDING MAKING ARRESTS, WHENEVER A CRIME IS COMMITTED IN THEIR PRESENCE.

IN REALITY, THE POLICEMEN MAY FEEL THEY ARE TOO BUSY DIRECTING TRAFFIC OR TAKING CARE OF OTHER POLICE DUTIES TO ARREST A SINGLE PUSHER. HOWEVER, THIS MUST CHANGE. WE SHOULD DEMAND THE ARREST OF ALL DRUG DEALERS.

QUESTION: RECENTLY, WE'VE SEEN A NUMBER OF STORIES IN THE NEWS ABOUT CORRUPTION IN PANAMA AND HOW THE CORRUPTION IS TIED TO DRUG TRAFFICKING AND DRUG TRAFFICKING FOR ARMS. WHAT DOES THE UNITED STATES PLAN TO DO ABOUT THIS?

ANSWER: DRUGS CORRUPT AND DESTROY. AND THAT IS THE REASON WE ARE DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN TO STOP DRUG ABUSE.

AS FOR WHAT IS BEING DONE, THE PROBLEM IS BEING HANDLED IN THE APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT CHANNELS TO ENSURE THAT ANY REAL PROBLEM IS RESOLVED.

WE SIMPLY CANNOT ACCEPT INTERNATIONAL CRIMINALS DESTROYING OUR COUNTRY. AND WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT DRUG USERS SHOULD ALSO BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ROLE IN FINANCING THIS KIND OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Tom Stenzel

463-6770

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3-16-84

2:09 pm Sue came in. She upset  
over call. @ 2:10 call Bruce Miller & discussed  
issue. called STEVE - He is to call me back.  
Bruce will call again after he reviews  
issue, Butler's not getting on Board.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Mrs  
Pena

Carlton,

Here's the draft for  
Bessie & Speed tapering.

It has been approved  
by everyone on this side.  
We just need your O.K.

6-16-46

Called her &

said all decided

in 2nd @ - He said  
OK Thanks!

Ken

File Mrs Keas

write

7. AIDS - Crack - Drug use  
Realizing needs

Mrs Keas on AIDS and the Fear of AIDS  
going to help your cause for Drug freedom.

Why not legalize drugs & take away the  
\$ from trafficker

Crack - consequences

- Mrs Keas why are we seeing Black Tax on  
the streets if Mexico is doing a good job

INSOME

- Calif cities no drug testing is allowed now  
The State is going to set guidelines  
on Test Do you have a card in

Drug testing

(Drug use in workplace)

Diogenes Smith - S.M. → 1 card →

VIDEOTAPING FOR THE BESSIE S. SPEED CENTER

DRAFT

HELLO. I'M NANCY REAGAN.

I AM DELIGHTED TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DEDICATION CEREMONIES OF THE BESSIE S. SPEED CENTER FOR ALCOHOL AND DRUG EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI.

THE BESSIE S. SPEED CENTER, BECAUSE OF ITS WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES, IS AN EXCITING AND INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO SOLVING THE DRUG ABUSE PROBLEM IN A UNIVERSITY SETTING.

ALL TOO OFTEN, A YOUNG PERSON TURNS TO DRUGS WHEN THE PRESSURES AND DEMANDS OF LIFE SEEM TOO DIFFICULT TO HANDLE. TURNING TO DRUGS TO ESCAPE THESE PRESSURES CAN DO NOTHING BUT DESTROY THE HOPES AND DREAMS OF AN ASPIRING STUDENT. THAT IS WHY IT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT EACH AND EVERY UNIVERSITY ACROSS THE NATION FOLLOW YOUR EXAMPLE AND ESTABLISH CENTERS LIKE THIS ONE -- A PLACE WHERE SOMEONE CAN GO FOR HELP.

I OFFER MY CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU, MRS. SPEED, AND EVERYONE HERE TONIGHT WHO HAS WORKED SO HARD TO MAKE THIS CENTER A REALITY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE. BY WORKING TOGETHER, I KNOW THAT WE WILL ONE DAY CONQUER DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE ONCE AND FOR ALL.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL.



World Affairs Council

1) What are some your efforts for 5K about to you please to do  
for the rest of the year? Drug Free - Future - continue  
work to go better for our - Society

2) What lesson have you learnt to control drugs when we  
have an open border policy ~~we have always~~ ~~had~~ ~~open~~ ~~border~~ ~~policy~~ ~~we~~ ~~have~~ ~~always~~  
had open border in our society - closing borders  
will not stop drugs - Prescription - Say no  
mothers to mothers - 1. is it worth it

3. Involvement  
in the  
NSTDP

Mrs. Reagan why did the President say about  
drugs in the recently declassified documents  
V-P President Bush mention a couple of  
weeks ago? Drugs destroy our youth & our  
infrastructure - changed with a meeting - non obligatory  
but as duty to protect country, Pres. Directive  
formally set stage. L. Military

4. What are you coming into the U.S. to pick out  
gains we have made -

5. Mexico - San Gabriel State University

6. James Mills - Analyst since - NBC - commentator  
who stated Policy was not working -