

MEETING THE DRUG CHALLENGE
A PROGRESS REPORT

Remarks of Ambassador Luigi R. Einaudi
Permanent Representative of the United States
to the
Organization of American States
before the
Permanent Council of the OAS
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This is a good time to take stock in the Permanent Council of progress in the antidrug effort.

- Last week, on February 14, the White House submitted to Congress the third National Drug Control Strategy.
- This month also marks a year since the Cartagena Summit, a watershed event in our approach to cooperation on drug matters.
- Next month, the Inter-American Commission on the Control of Drug Abuse (CICAD) will meet in Mexico to advance the work of the OAS on drugs.

The good news from my country is real: there is finally indisputable progress on the "demand side." U.S. Principal Representative to CICAD, Senator Paula Hawkins reported at the October CICAD meeting that (figures updated):

- Over the last decade, senior high-school student use of drugs has fallen by half.
- In the last 5 years, student use of cocaine has dropped by over two-thirds.
- Overall, we estimate that 44% fewer Americans use drugs than in 1985.

Dr. Louis Sullivan, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, has now presented the following encouraging fact:

"For the first time since (the annual National High School Senior Drug Abuse Survey) was initiated in 1975, less than 50% of high school seniors have tried an illicit drug -- under 48% for 1990. This is a significant milestone, down from a peak of 66% in 1982 ..."

Some other findings noted by Dr. Sullivan:

- a 47% percent reduction in the rate of current cocaine use (at least once in the previous 30 days) among all ages since 1988;

- daily use of crack by high school seniors down half from 1989 to 1990 (from 0.2 percent to 0.1 percent); and,
- a 30% decline in cocaine-related emergency room visits between third quarter of 1989 and second quarter of 1990.

We are making significant progress. We are on the right path. We are giving the lie to those who say this problem cannot be controlled. We are proving that bad trends are not "irreversible"; and we have reinforced good trends.

In 1989, at the time of our first National Drug Strategy report, my government set nine objectives with respect to drug use.

- We set as a goal for 1991 a 10% reduction overall drug use. Actual use declined by some 11%.
- We set as a goal for 1991 a 10% reduction in occasional cocaine use. Actual decline by some 29%.
- We set as a goal a 20% reduction in the number of current adolescent cocaine users. Actual use declined by 49% percent.
- We had hoped for a 50% slowing in the increase of frequent cocaine use. Happily, we got much more than we aimed for. There was an actual decline of 23% in two years.

All in all, we met our goals on the seven objectives for which date is available.

Are we satisfied with these results? No. Have we neared the end of our efforts? Again, no. As Dr. Sullivan says:

"there are still millions of Americans trapped in the web of addiction, poor health, violence, crime and death. We must temper our optimism with the knowledge of the difficult work that lies ahead before illicit drug use is finally and completely eliminated from our country."

The federal government will continue to expand funding and programs in every facet of the effort to control abuse of drugs. And what the U.S. federal government does is only a part of the total national effort.

As the Drug Strategy report says, "The clearest signs of progress in the fight against drugs are to be found in our schools, our neighborhoods, and our workplace."

- In Fort Meyer, Florida, the Coalition for a Drug-Free Lee County galvanized the community, which collected over \$1.6 million to support drug prevention programs.
- In Kenilworth-Parkside in Washington, D. C., residents confronted the drug dealers and drug devastation by forming a resident management corporation. Within four years of the formation of the group, drug-related crime had been cut by 75 percent.
- One community combines enforcement and treatment. In Overland Park, Kansas, a city ordinance requires that first-time offenders found guilty of marijuana possession serve at least 48 hours in confinement and pay a \$200 fine; they are given a choice of a minimum 30-day jail sentence or a treatment option for which the offender pays the cost.
- The Miami Building and Construction Trade Council has renovated and expanded an infant center for crack babies, making it the largest facility of its kind in the country. And it has done this with labor volunteered by local citizens.

We in the United States are mobilizing against drugs. And we are getting results.

I have reported on what my country is doing and the positive trends we have seen. But the problem of drugs is not confined to the United States. The problem is hemispheric, in fact global, -- whether one focusses on supply or demand.

On the demand side, it is tragically ironic that falling consumption in the United States has been accompanied by rising consumption elsewhere in the world. On the supply side, we know when efforts to interdict the flow of drugs close down one sea, land, or air route, another is often found to replace it. Our successes are enough to give us heart. They are not enough to relax our vigilance and our cooperation.

Consider one drug smuggler's ruse. A van was bought in Canada and shipped to Chile via Los Angeles. It was then driven to Bolivia where the chassis was packed with 90 kilos of cocaine. Driven to Buenos Aires, the van was then shipped to Belgium. It was intercepted in Antwerp as Canada-bound cargo!

This particular story has a happy ending. It illustrates the global scope of trafficking, but it also shows that international cooperation can disrupt the best laid plans of the traffickers.

Our efforts to combat the drug menace are not just becoming increasingly international. They are becoming

increasingly complex and sophisticated. Since the Cartagena summit a year ago, we have seen simultaneous movement on many fronts. Notably, many of these fronts involve efforts to change environments that facilitate drug production and consumption. The Andean Trade Initiative (reintroduced in the Congress last month), Bilateral Investment Treaties, Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties, Framework Agreements, efforts at the GATT and towards an international coffee agreement -- all are measures the United States is pursuing in part because they will contribute to prosperity and the rule of law. President Bush himself has attributed his decision to develop the Enterprise for the Americas initiative to his discussions a year ago in Cartagena.

As the U.S. Ambassador to the OAS, I am proud to be associated with an international organization that has distinguished itself in its efforts to deal with the drug menace. And I am especially pleased to be able to report to you today that our National Drug Control Strategy repeatedly and explicitly recognizes the value of OAS CICAD antidrug programs.

Let me quote from the international chapter of the report.

"(in April 1990) more than 20 countries sent representatives to the Organization of American States' (OAS) Ministerial Conference at Ixtapa, Mexico. The Ixtapa forum resulted in agreement to extend the hemispheric framework for attacking drug production, trafficking, and abuse."

"The OAS has tasked a group of experts with developing model regulations to implement at the national level the money laundering provisions of the Vienna Convention. Many OAS member states as well as other governments in the Caribbean are participating in the Caribbean Drug Money Laundering Conference." Earlier the report refers to the approval of model regulations on precursor and essential chemicals -- these standards are, I should add, the toughest anywhere in the world.

"In May 1990, . . . a Plan of Action for region-wide drug abuse education was adopted in Quito under OAS auspices."

Inertia is the greatest enemy of progress. Happily, there is real momentum behind hemispheric efforts to deal with the drug problem. The Americas are engaged. We have come a long distance together. And it is well to recall just how far. Although we are still far short of victory, we are well beyond good intentions and rhetoric. We have made a strong start and with renewed commitment and continuing effort we can show decisive results.