

Remarks at the Global Coalition To Address Synthetic Drug Threats in New York City

September 24, 2024

Thank you. To all the—my fellow leaders from nations around the world, thank you for being here. It makes a big difference.

A couple of years ago, a father who I got to meet from a small town here in the United States wrote me a letter about his daughter. Her name was Courtney. She was bright and smart, she had a laugh that was contagious, and wanted to travel the world. But, in high school, she became addicted to pills.

Her father eventually brought her to a treatment facility, but his insurance company wouldn't cover the cost. They said, quote, "It wasn't a matter of life and death." A month later, Courtney died from a fentanyl overdose. She was just 20 years old—20 years old.

In his letter that he wrote to me, he described life without his child. He said, and I quote, "There is no greater pain." "There is no greater pain." I told him I know what it's like, having lost several children myself—two children. There is no greater pain. They still live in your heart, but there's no greater pain.

Ladies and gentlemen, that's why we're here. Too many people all across our Nation have stories like this. Too many families have suffered unbearable pain and unbearable loss.

Opioids are the deadliest drug threat in our history. I've been working on drug control for a long, long time—since the days I was a Senator—but this is the deadliest of them all.

For years, too little has been done to beat this threat here at home and around the world. In fact, before I came to office, overdose deaths in our country were increasing by more than 30 percent year over year.

But when I became President, I made beating opioid endemic [epidemic; White House correction] a central part of the unity agenda, something that our entire Nation could rally around and has.

For over the last 4 years, we've turned that agenda into action. My administration made—excuse me—made naloxone, a lifesaving overdose reversal medicine, available over the counter. You can purchase it over the counter for the first time. We invested over \$80 billion across 50 States to expand access to addiction treatment and support. I issued an Executive order that cut cartel leaders off from financial—our financial system, including issuing 300 sanctions. And I've deployed hundreds of advanced X-ray machines to stop the threat of pills and powder coming across our border.

Because I want to be clear: This is—this is—a national security threat.

In July of this year, I signed a national security memorandum. It officially recognized that fact, that it is a national security threat. It calls on every part of our Government to do more to stop fentanyl and protect our homeland from this threat.

But, as all of you know, this is a global challenge, and it requires a global solutions.

So we established the Trilateral Fentanyl Committee with Canada and Mexico to stop narcotics from crossing our border. I reignited counternarcotics cooperation with China to

increase law enforcement cooperation and tackle the supply chains of precursor chemicals and pill presses.

And I directed my team to build this coalition—this Global Coalition To Address Synthetic Drugs. As all of you here know, this coalition now has, as the Secretary of State said, 150 nations as part of it.

The result of these efforts: More fentanyl has been seized at our border in the last 2 years than the previous 5 years combined—in the previous 5 years combined. Nearly 60,000 pounds of fentanyl have been seized. That's enough to kill every single American many times over. Dozens of major cartel leaders and traffickers are now behind bars.

And I'm proud to announce, for the first time in 5 years, overdose deaths are actually coming down across America. The latest data shows a 10-percent drop. That's the largest decrease on record.

Folks, this matters. These aren't just facts and figures, they're families, families who don't have to bear the loss of a child, a parent, a spouse—families who are kept whole.

But there are too many that are still dying. There's so much more that needs to be done.

So my message today is very simple: We can't let up. We cannot let up. Drug manufacturers and cartels continue to adapt their practices, develop new chemicals, move fast to evade our efforts. We have to move faster.

They continue to exploit the global supply chains to expand their networks. We've got to cut them off. They continue to fuel violence, corruption, and instability. We've got to protect our people and our communities.

So that's why I'm calling on every nation here to commit to our new global coalition pledge. This lays out the action we must all take to seize more drugs, stop more cartels, save more lives.

I also want to thank the leaders here who are stepping up and launching a new initiatives today to advance coalition efforts all across three key areas: first, disrupting supply chain, including production and distribution of illicit drugs; secondly, detecting emerging drug threats and increasing information sharing across all our countries; and thirdly, preventing more deaths by treating more people through public health interventions, increased access to lifesaving medications.

It's possible. It's about disrupt, detect, prevent, and treat.

Together, we're making it clear: Enough is enough is enough.

Let me close with this. As leaders, we have—all have one solemn responsibility: protect our people from harm. Together, through this coalition, I believe we can do just that. We can disrupt the cycle of violence and instability that drug traffickers create. We can get our people the care they need and deserve. We can save lives, but only—but only—if we come together and work together. The choice is ours.

And I believe there can be only one answer: We can, we will, and we must.

So thank you all for being here. Let's get to work.

And I want to—you to hear from other leaders in this room as well.

So thank you, thank you, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:57 p.m. at the InterContinental New York Barclay hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Newton, NH, resident Doug Griffin; and Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, who introduced the President.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Global Coalition To Address Synthetic Drug Threats in New York City.

Locations: New York City.

Names: Blinken, Antony J.; Griffin, Doug.

Subjects: Canada, counternarcotic efforts, cooperation with U.S.; Drug and alcohol addiction, treatment and reduction efforts; Foreign narcotics traffickers; Global Coalition To Address Synthetic Drug Threats; Illegal drugs, interdiction efforts; Mexico, counternarcotic efforts, cooperation with U.S.; New York, President's visit; Opioid epidemic, efforts to combat; Secretary of State.

DCPD Number: DCPD202400816.