

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:37 p.m. in the ballroom at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel; Itamar Rabinovich, Israeli Ambassador to the United States; Martin Indyk, U.S. Ambassador to Israel; Melvin Dow, president,

Steve Grossman, chairman of the board, Neal Sher, executive director, Edward Levy, vice president, and Jack Bendheim, board member, American Israel Public Affairs Committee; Edgar Bronfman, president, World Jewish Congress; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks on the National Drug Control Strategy in Coral Gables, Florida *April 29, 1996*

Thank you very much. Thank you. Didn't Rachel do a good job? Give her another hand. She was great, wasn't she? [*Applause*]

Principal Heise, thank you for hosting us today and for your fine remarks, which I heard from behind the way there. I'm delighted to be on this stage with our two Cabinet members from Miami, Attorney General Reno and Secretary Rubin, and with General McCaffrey, who moved the SOUTHCOM here and wishes he were from Miami. You can tell by the Spanish speech he gave you. And he's doing a wonderful job, and I'm very proud of him.

I want to thank three of your distinguished State officials who came in with me today who are here: Lieutenant Governor Buddy MacKay, Attorney General Bob Butterworth, and Senator Daryl Jones, who has a son here somewhere—there he is. Your son is clapping for you, Daryl.

I want to thank Alvah Chapman and Marilyn Culp and Tad Foote and local television and other media executives. Judge Goldstein, of the local drug court, I thank him and all those involved in the drug court. I thank Dorothy Perry and all the community leaders. I want to thank all these young people in D-FY-IT. And I thank not only those who are here but those who came out to the airport to meet me.

We have the leader of America's Coast Guard, the leader of our Customs Service, and others here today, along with the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Treasury and General McCaffrey. We are here in Miami to announce a new drug strategy because of what Miami is doing to make the children of Miami and the future of Miami drug-free. I thank all of you who have been any part of that—the local officials, the religious leaders, the community

leaders, the school leaders. And I agree with Rachel that if we keep working, we can have the children of America educating the rest of us about this problem, and then it will go away for sure.

Miami has dealt with the biggest challenges that drugs present to America. And Miami knows that what I have said about the world toward which we are moving is true. We are going into a world of enormous possibility for our people, dominated by global trade and high technology. You have worked very hard to see that the people of southern Florida reap the benefits of global trade and high technology.

But you also know that the more open our borders are, the more freely people can travel, the more freely money can move and information and technology can be transferred, the more vulnerable we are to people who would seek to undermine the very fabric of civilized life, whether through terrorism, the weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, or drugs, and sometimes through all of the above.

So the great challenge we face, my fellow Americans, is how to get the benefits of this world toward which we are moving and not be exposed to the forces that would undermine our ability to raise strong children in strong families in good, strong communities.

That's what this national drug strategy is about. It focuses on rising drug use among children. It confronts head-on the fact that crime and drugs are vicious co-conspirators. You heard General McCaffrey allude to that. A significant percentage of the people in the prison systems of America today are there because of drug problems. If they weren't stealing money to pay for a drug habit, dealing drugs in the first place,

or behaving irrationally because of an addiction to drugs, we would be spending that money on educating our children and building our future instead of maintaining a prison system. And that's what we ought to do.

But all of you here at George Washington Carver are a shining example of what it will ultimately take to make a drug strategy work all across America, people at the grassroots level. This school—I've heard you cheering for it before, but I want you to know why we're here. We are not here by accident, and we are not here because of anything we have done. We are here because of what you have done: zero guns, zero assaults, zero incidents of drug-related violence, zero drugs. That's where America ought to go and where America can go.

We are here because of what Miami has done. I have watched this city and this county recover from a massive storm to host the Summit of the Americas, to attract the Southern Command of the United States military, and now to set a standard that all other cities should follow in reducing the problem of drug abuse. The Coalition for a Safe and Drug-Free Community has worked hard with all the rest of the people here so that drug use dropped more than 50 percent between 1991 and 1993 alone. That was the biggest decline in any metropolitan area in the country. I'd like to see that on some of the TV shows on prime time about Miami.

Let me again thank the members of the coalition. I thank the students here today and I thank the Attorney General, who was a founding member back when she had her other job here in Dade County. Or as those of us in the administration say, back when we had a life, Janet Reno lived in Miami, and I thank her for what she did and for what you are doing.

Now, while it is true that in the end this work has to be done student by student, family by family, school by school, neighborhood by neighborhood, we must acknowledge that the Nation's Government has a role to play. In this new era, when we are reducing the size of Government and its burden, when we have a Federal Establishment that today in 1996 is the smallest the National Government has been since 1965—and by the end of this year it will be the smallest it's been since 1962—we still have responsibilities to help people throughout America make the most of their own lives and their families and their communities. And a big part of that is to make sure Americans can feel secure in their homes, on their streets, and in

their schools, with drug-free homes, drug-free streets, and drug-free schools.

Our crime bill is helping reduce the crime rate by giving communities police officers, 100,000 of them, in community settings in America; banning 19 deadly assault weapons. The Brady bill, which now requires a waiting period before you can buy a handgun, has kept 60,000 people with criminal records from purchasing guns and endangering innocent citizens. It is working.

I was so inspired by my personal experience watching your drug court here, and the Attorney General's experience when she took office, that we have worked hard to help others establish drug courts around America. There are now more than 100 of them in the United States. And I think every community ought to have one, and we're going to keep going until every community has the chance to have one.

We've also used the crime bill to help schools fight drugs and violence, to help them support programs like D.A.R.E. and GREAT, to help them with gang prevention, and when they're needed, with things like metal detectors and increased securities. We are opening the way to do more in this area.

But I want to say a special word of thanks to the people here who have taken a pledge to abstain from drugs and alcohol. You heard Rachel talk about that. I believe that if every student in every school in America took that pledge and reaffirmed it on a regular basis, a lot of these other things would not be necessary. So I'd like to ask all the students who have taken that pledge to stand today. If you took a pledge to be free of drugs and alcohol, stand up, and the rest of us would like to applaud you. *[Applause]*

While not every community in America can claim the results that Miami can, you should know that every year for the last 3 years, murders have dropped and robberies have dropped and drug use has dropped. Monthly drug use today is roughly half of what it was 10 years ago in America. The number of cocaine users has fallen by 30 percent in the last 3 years alone. But we have a lot to do. And again, it's why we're at this school. The most perplexing problem that we face in this area is this: While the drug rate has gone down, drug usage among people under 18 has gone up. While the crime rate has gone down, random violence

among people under 18 has gone up. The children who are here today are the battleground of today and tomorrow. They are the people for whom we must fight this great battle, and they are the ones we must rely on to win it by working with them.

That is why I am announcing today a new and intensified strategy to battle drugs that builds and improves on the work we have done over the last 3 years, calls for more resources from the Nation than ever before, and targets those resources better than ever. This National Drug Control Strategy of 1996, as General McCaffrey said, is meant to be a 10-year plan. He worked on it very, very hard with many others. I want to thank him again for it, and I want to thank him for being willing to give up his four stars and his military command to fight America's most important battle for the future.

Very briefly, this strategy has five very concrete goals: Number one, to get young people to reject drugs—that's what you're doing here; number two, to use effective treatment and prevention to break this vicious cycle that links drugs to violent crime; third, to stop drugs at the border, the way we are doing at the Miami Customs Office where technology and street smarts are catching more drugs with less inconvenience to arriving visitors; fourth, to break up the sources of supply, whether they are cocaine farms in Colombia or methamphetamine labs in California; and finally, to reduce the terrible social and economic costs imposed by drugs on our society, \$69 billion in the last year.

Now, to meet these goals, we are asking Congress, as we cut spending and move toward a balanced budget, to increase funding for the drug war by 9.3 percent. We can't stop drugs if our schools, hospitals, and communities don't have the tools they need to get the job done. We have to have the support of Congress to do this.

Make no mistake about it, this has got to be a bipartisan, American, nonpolitical effort. If we're going to keep our commitment to put 100,000 new community police officers on the street, we are going to have to do that. If we are going to keep our commitment to give schools the funds they need for the safe and drug-free schools program, we have to do that. And I am proud that the budget I signed last

week from the Congress included both those programs.

We are also working hard in Washington to try to protect you from new problems before they come to your doorstep, and that's an important job of the Nation's Government. I thank Secretary Rubin for getting the early warning on Rohypnol, a powerful and dangerous sedative, to stop it from flooding across our borders. I thank the Attorney General for the work she has done with General McCaffrey and others on the methamphetamine strategy. That is a deadly drug. It is gaining in popularity. In 2 years, deaths from this drug have doubled. I'm glad it's not here yet, but we have to stop it before it becomes the crack of the 1990's, and we are going after it right now.

So let me say again, if we're going to win this battle, we have to be prepared to pay the price of time. We have to be prepared to ask ourselves, each and every one of us, what is our job? This National Drug Control Strategy is our effort to answer the question: What is our job? What is the President's job? What is the Cabinet's job? What is General McCaffrey's job?

But we know in the end it is all of you here at the community level doing your jobs that will determine the fate of the children who are here. And ultimately it is their job to say no to destructive forces in their lives and yes to the future, no to an empty fantasy land and yes to the fantasy of an unimaginable future that is out there for all of our young people who will prepare themselves for it. That is ultimately the goal we must all share and work for as Americans.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:46 a.m. at George Washington Carver Middle School. In his remarks, he referred to Rachel Berne, Drug-Free Youth in Town (D-FY-IT) program participant, who introduced the President; Pregri Heise, Carver Middle School principal; Alvah Chapman, director, Knight-Ridder, Inc.; Marilyn Culp, executive director, Miami Coalition for a Safe and Drug-Free Community; Edward T. Foote, president, University of Miami; Judge Stanley Goldstein, 11th Circuit; and Dorothy Perry, chief executive officer, Youth Progressing, Inc.