

they may be at this very, very difficult time.

THE DRUG EPIDEMIC

Mr. COVERDELL. Today we are going to talk about another war, and that is the domestic war that is infecting millions upon millions of Americans—primarily teenagers—as we deal with yet a new drug epidemic in the United States. And “epidemic” is the right word. It is hard to believe that we are in the midst of one. And we hope that the next hour and a half will be in part a wake-up call to Americans across our land that all of us have to be engaged in—putting the question mark in the mind of every teenager as to the effect on their lives of abuse of drugs. All I can say is, even if they ultimately recuperate from it, that their lives will be unalterably and forever changed.

With that, Mr. President, I yield to the distinguished Senator from Texas for up to 10 minutes on this issue. I know he wants to say a word or two about Iraq as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, let me thank our dear colleague from Georgia.

THE CONFLICT IN IRAQ

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I have always tried to make it a matter of policy to be supportive of the President on international and military affairs whenever possible. I think each of us in the Senate owe it to the President to give him the benefit of the doubt on military matters. Certainly we owe it to those in uniform to be supportive of them when they are in harm's way.

I believe that given the conflict among the warring Kurdish factions in the northern part of Iraq and the instability there that the President's actions can be justified both to send a warning to Saddam Hussein and to destroy the air defense capability in the southern part of the country so that we might extend the no-fly zone.

But, having said that, Mr. President, let me make it very clear that while giving the President the benefit of the doubt I can support the actions he has taken in firing 27 cruise missiles and destroying air defense capacity in expanding the no-fly zone, and while I certainly support our military forces in the region, if we look at the fundamental conflict, it is a conflict between two warring Kurdish factions—one backed by Iraq and one backed by Iran, and we do not have a dog in that fight.

If this conflict escalates, if this becomes a conflict between Iran and Iraq, I think the President would be poorly advised in becoming involved in that conflict and I would not and could not support such an involvement.

THE DRUG EPIDEMIC

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I want to talk a little bit about drug use. You

may recall that many people derided or made fun of Nancy Reagan's “just say no” approach to the use of illegal drugs. But I think it is interesting that for 11 years in a row during the Reagan-Bush era drug use among our children declined. Just saying no was a policy that worked. It seems now that we are not saying no enough in Washington and our children are not saying no enough in our junior high schools.

If we look at the record on drug use, it is a frightening sight as to what is happening. Overall drug use has more than doubled in the last 4 years. Drug use among teenagers is up 105 percent in the last 4 years. The use of marijuana among teenagers has risen 141 percent. Cocaine usage among teenagers in the last 2 years has gone up by 160 percent. Today 1 out of every 10 children in America between the ages of 12—that is the sixth grade—and 17 now are using drugs at least once a month.

How did Washington contribute to this tragedy that is occurring in every junior high school in America? I think it started when President Clinton took office and, in his first days, cut the drug czar's office by 83 percent. President Clinton cut drug interdiction spending 25 percent below the level carried in the last Bush budget. Between 1992 and 1995, 227 positions at DEA were eliminated. Drug prosecutions in 1993 and 1994 declined by 12 percent, and the average sentence for selling marijuana declined by 13 percent from 1992 to 1995.

I think if we are serious about this problem that we need to end the debate that we have been engaged in with the administration for the last 4 years where the President is trying to eliminate mandatory minimum prison sentences for hoodlums who are selling drugs at junior high schools, and we need to enact reforms that the Senate has adopted numerous times, and yet which has not yet become the law of the land. I have proposed 10 years in prison without parole for selling drugs to a minor or involving a minor in drug trafficking, so every hoodlum in America, when they are thinking about selling drugs to a child, will understand that if they are convicted they are going to prison and they are going to serve every day of 10 years in prison no matter who their daddy is or how they may think society has done them wrong.

I also want life in prison for people who get out of prison having been convicted once of selling drugs to a minor and turn right around and do it again.

I think when we look at this data on drug use it is obvious that we are not doing our job. I think we need to change that pattern. I want to double the size of the Border Patrol. This last year we took a first step. It is a major step in the right direction. Right now we have more police officers in Washington, DC, than we have Border Patrol agents trying to police and control the entire border of the United States of America. It is not unusual—in fact it is

the norm—to have on any shift in a 300-mile strip from Brownsville to Laredo 87 Border Patrol agents actually working that line. We are using in many cases near-obsolete sensing devices, while the military has great night vision and infrared capacity. We do not have similar capability in the Border Patrol. That needs to change.

We need to double the size of the Border Patrol over the next 5 years. I believe that given the threat we face from armed drug gangs, with automatic weapons, with night-vision capability, and with sophisticated electronic communications basically invading our country nightly, that we do not now have the resources we need and we have certainly not committed the will to keep drugs out of our country.

We need to expand the capacity of the FBI Academy. I think we should have a goal that within 5 years we double the training capacity of the FBI Academy. In no other way can we give local law enforcement personnel the enrichment of training that they need and which can, in turn, be passed on within their police departments and their sheriff departments.

We need to expand the size of the DEA. I think if you will look at your individual State, you are going to find that in many vast regions we have only two or three or four DEA agents. And let me make it clear. I have no criticism of our Border Patrol agents, our FBI agents, our DEA agents. They are doing their job. The problem is they are not getting the support they need from Washington.

We need to prosecute vigorously drug felons in general and criminals who are selling drugs to children. I would like to see us change our building code and stop building prisons like Holiday Inns. We have at least three Federal statutes which criminalize making prisoners work. Prisoners cannot produce goods to be sold across State lines. They cannot produce items to be sold within the State. We have limits on the transport of prison-produced goods and you have to pay the union scale if you make prisoners work. Needless to say, not many prisoners in America are working and producing anything of value.

We took the first step in the Senate toward changing that last year. That effort died because it was opposed in the House and by the President. But I think we need to continue to work to change the criminal justice system in America.

In addition to that, we have to take a zero-tolerance approach to drugs. We need to make it very clear to young people that drug use is not acceptable. We need to hold people who are buying drugs just as responsible as people who are selling drugs. Whether we are talking about a high school student or a wide receiver for the Dallas Cowboys, drug use should be a serious matter. I think we ought to call on our professional athletic leagues, the NFL, professional baseball, professional basketball, to set higher standards. If people