

PRESIDENT GIVES 'HIGHEST PRIORITY' TO DRUG PROBLEM

Announces a National Drive
on Addiction Among Both
G.I.'s and Civilians

HOLDS A NEWS PARLEY

Statement Is Pledged Soon
on U.S. Role in Low-Cost
Housing in Suburbs

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WASHINGTON, June 1—President Nixon declared tonight that he would make the problem of drug addiction in America—among both veterans from Vietnam and others—a matter of the highest priority. He announced that he would launch “a national offensive” against narcotics on four fronts.

Mr. Nixon, who is known to have fresh recommendations on the drug problem on his desk, said his objectives would be to reduce the supply of heroin at its principal sources, accelerate the prosecution of pushers, enlarge facilities for the treatment and rehabilitation of addicts, and provide the American people with a “massive program of information” on the origins and consequences of addiction.

The President, who made his comments at a news conference broadcast to a nationwide television and radio audience from the East Room of the White House, also covered a wide range of domestic and international topics.

Politically Sensitive Issue

He disclosed that the White House would release shortly “a comprehensive statement” on the politically sensitive issue of whether the Government should use its leverage to require a greater degree of low-cost and presumably integrated housing in the suburbs.

The first question the President was asked was whether he planned to take up the offer of Leonid I. Brezhnev of the Soviet Union to negotiate the withdrawal of troops from Central Europe. Mr. Nixon said that a study was still being made of the question and that a decision would be made after consultations with our allies.

Open to Trip to Europe

Asked if he intended to go to Europe to consult with leaders there, the President said he had no plans to make such a trip in the near future but would go any place to further peace and aid in disarmament.

In response to a question about the tens of thousands of American servicemen who are addicted to heroin, the President said that the problem was

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not limited to veterans but was a national problem, focused primarily on young people.

He said that the problem was of the “highest priority” and outlined areas for Administration action.

The first area, he said, would be to cut off sources of heroin, the second area to prosecute pushers, the third to treat addicts and the fourth to inform the American people of the dimensions of the problem.

Bombing Query Deflected

Mr. Nixon deflected a question about his response to those who regard massive bombings in Vietnam as a war crime. He noted his Quaker heritage and consequent distaste for war. This, he said, would apply also to activities in Vietnam, if they were carried on in a vacuum.

But they are not in a vacuum, the President said, for American involvement in Vietnam is important both to self-determination for Vietnam and to discouraging aggression elsewhere.

Mr. Nixon acknowledged that the Administration might pursue two avenues concerning possible areas of United States-Soviet agreement on arms. Defensive weapons, he said, are simpler and thus more susceptible to a formal treaty. Offen-

sive weapons, more varied and complicated, might be dealt with, initially at least, by a mutual “understanding,” he added.

The Mideast Situation

He refused to answer a question whether the plan of Representative Paul N. McCloskey, Republican of California, to run against him for the G. O. P. Presidential nomination made him “nervous” or was considered a welcome challenge. The President said a news conference was not the proper place for such questions.

The recent 15-year friendship treaty between the Soviet Union and Egypt, Mr. Nixon said, would jeopardize peace in the Middle East only if it is followed by the introduction of new weapons. The United States, he said, continues to support the current truce and continues to seek normal relations with all countries in the region.

Mr. Nixon was questioned sharply and repeatedly about the mass arrests of demonstrators here early last month. He vigorously defended police conduct.

Although many demonstrators have been released, the President said, he hopes future demonstrators here can be handled as well—and that other cities would emulate the Washington example.