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NEW DRUG AGENCY TO FIGHT PUSHERS ON LOWER LEVELS

NIXON TO ANNOUNCE PROJECT, HEADED BY CUSTOMS CHIEF, IN JUSTICE DEPARTMENT—
AREA CALLED NEGLECTED—NEW YORK AMONG 24 INITIAL TARGETS—CITIES THAT AID
WILL GET FEDERAL FUNDS

(By Robert M. Smith)

WASHINGTON, January 18.—The Administration is preparing a new program to cope with traffickers on the intermediate level and in the street retail trade in narcotic drugs, according to Government sources. It will be head by Myles J. Ambrose, now the Commissioner of Customs.

The program, which will be centered in a new Office of Drug Enforcement in the Justice Department, will be announced by President Nixon Thursday in his State of the Union Message, with the details to be provided next weekend, the Government informants say.

The aim of the program, according to the sources, is to focus sharply on an area of the drug problem that the Administration believes has been neglected—the lower levels of suppliers. The tools that will be used are investigations and grand juries, with close links among the Federal, state, and local authorities.

24 Target Areas

Initially at least, Mr. Ambrose will have 24 target areas in his program. These include New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago and Washington. The informants indicate that funds will be made available to the cities by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration to cooperate in the program.

Meanwhile, in an effort to curb the heavy return flow of amphetamines from Mexico into this country, the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs took action against the largest exporter of the drug. It ordered Strassenburgh Prescription Products of Rochester, a division of the Pennwalt Corporation of Philadelphia, to show why its export license should not be revoked. The legal action was the first step toward revoking the license.

Some Funds Available

In the projected drive against the lower levels of narcotic suppliers, it was not known how much money would be spent on the program. Some of the money, according to Government sources, will come from funds already appropriated for the Justice Department—for the Criminal Division, for example. No Congressional action is believed necessary to set up the new office. But the Administration may have to ask Congress for more money for this specific project.

In a sense, to those familiar with the program report, it is an outgrowth of a cooperative effort already under way in New York City, where agents of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, the New York Police Department and the United States Attorney's office have been working together on the narcotics problem. The program also parallels the strike forces that bring the resources of several Federal agencies to bear on organized crime.

Some of those close to the project say that one of the motives leading to it has been a glaring lack of cooperation between the Customs Bureau, charged with keeping narcotics out of the country, and the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, headed by John E. Ingersoll, charged with policing drugs within the country. Mr. Ingersoll, who was reached today by telephone in Paris, where he has been meeting with French police officials, would make no comment.

Democratic sources in Congress suggested that the program might be part of an increased effort by the Administration, in an election year, to put teeth in its drive against crime and particularly to help communities move against street crime. The restoration of "law and order" was part of the Administration's platform in 1968.

As described by Government sources, the project represents an effort against a neglected link in the chain of narcotics distribution and a neglected element in the system of narcotics supply and demand.

They explained that, on the demand side, the Administration was trying to educate people not to use drugs and to rehabilitate those who do. On the supply side, it is attempting to work with foreign governments to keep narcotics from