

Uncle Sam's War on America

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Welcome to the Show

Most of us are familiar with alcohol prohibition, which began in 1920 and was quickly repealed in the early 30s. During that time, the sale of alcohol was outlawed in America, and this created far more problems than it solved. Consequences of the federal government outlawing a much-used substance included increased crime rates, increased acts of violence, and one theory even suggests that use of alcohol actually increased. One would find it extremely difficult to locate an educated individual that believes prohibition had positive effects. Prohibition was an absolutely indefensible attack on personal freedom. But most people believe prohibition ended in 1933. Wrong. Soon after began another prohibition, one that for a number of invalid reasons, was largely accepted in contrast to alcohol prohibition.

The prohibition I speak of is that of substances we refer to as illicit drugs. Marijuana, LSD, Cocaine, Heroin, Ecstasy, Meth, Psilocybin mushrooms, and countless other substances have been the subject of many laws and regulations which prohibit their use. But although these laws greatly infringe upon America's personal freedoms, they do not increase America's order. For starters, some of these drugs are actually relatively harmless, especially in comparison to the others, yet they are all grouped together as one big menace to society. The drug war is costing American taxpayers large sums of money, and those numbers are only growing larger. So are the numbers of drug users, however, showing that despite the massive amounts being spent, the entire charade is simply ineffective. America's so-called "War on Drugs" has been one of the most costly movements in history, but despite this it has created far more problems than it will ever solve.

Drugs Make you MURDEROUS!!!

The only real argument available to any government policy that limits America's freedom is that such limits would cause an increase in order. As such, one of the most popular arguments for the "War on Drugs" is that drugs make people do terrible things, such as murder and violent crime.

But the statistics suggest quite the opposite.

Homicide charts do correspond very neatly with prohibition of alcohol and the beginning of the "War on Drugs", but perhaps not in the way one might imagine. In the very early 1900s, homicide was extremely low, with about .0001% of the population being murdered each year^[1]. In 1905, however, states all over America began to produce laws against drugs and alcohol, and although nothing was passed on a federal level, the national homicide rate jumped five times to .0005% by 1910^[1]. Alcohol Prohibition in 1920 sent the homicide rate to an all-time high of .00095%^[1]. After prohibition, the rate declined slowly but surely back down to .00035% in 1960^[1]. 1969 marked the official beginning of Nixon's "War on Drugs". 1975 showed another all-time high, topping a homicide rate of .001%, which only increased to .0011% by 1980^[1]. Since then, the homicide rate has hovered between the very high murder rates of .001% and .0008%^[2]. The evidence here certainly seems to indicate that contrary to popular belief, it is not drugs that fuel violent crime, but the "War on Drugs".

But what about deaths related to the usage of the drugs? Let's start with the licit ones. Tobacco and alcohol together kill about 520,000 - over *half a million* Americans - every single year^[3]. Prescription drugs kill 750,000^[4], the equivalent of September 11 happening *every single day*. Now for illicit drugs. Cocaine kills 2200^[3]. Heroin is actually relatively harmless to the body, although hugely addictive. The only reason the death toll is as high as Aspirin - 2000 Americans per year^[3] - is that the purity of the substance varies greatly, and this results from its illegality and disorganized origins^[18]. Marijuana, while accounting for almost half of the total drug arrests and funding^[5], kills a whopping *zero*^[3]. In the history of the United States, and the world for that matter, there has never been a death directly attributed to cannabis use. To put these numbers in the most concise way possible, 40 million illicit drug-users in America^{[6][7]} produce less than *one one-hundredth* of the

American deaths associated with 45 million tobacco-users^[8].

\$ Let's Talk About Money \$

The drug war is very expensive. In 2005, the official number was \$40.5 billion^[9] according to the U.S. Government itself, and their statistics leave out several key factors^[10]. That number is quite likely to hit \$70 billion in 2007^[5], and the 2008 federal budget proposes even more money - as much as \$90 billion^[11] - be thrown into the black hole they call the "War on Drugs". None of these figures come close to the true amount being spent, which is incalculable. One should also consider the reductions that could be made to law enforcement, the positive effects legalized drugs might have on the nation's economy, and much more.

Who supports the "War on Drugs", then, if it is so counter-productive? A few examples include recreational drug companies that produce tobacco and alcohol, as well as pharmaceutical drug companies which produce pain-killers like Aspirin, among other things. Marijuana competes directly in both categories, providing the best pain relief known to man, ailments to a large number of medical conditions^[12], as well as an enjoyable buzz when used responsibly, with no adverse effects on one's health^[13]. It stands to reason that, with cannabis illegal, pain-killer money that would otherwise be flowing throughout the Nation's economy instead heads directly into the publicly traded drug companies, why by law are required to make money their number one priority.

"The War on Drugs" Is a War on Americans

Every twenty seconds, a legitimate American citizen is arrested for possession or sale of drugs^[2]. In 2003, there was a record high of 1,678,192 arrests^[5]. 2007 is expected to exceed even that^[5]. Most people in favor of the drug war will be quick to point out that we don't want these drug users - who are also thieves and murderers, at least in their mind - roaming the same streets as

America's children. It should be noted, however, that there are an estimated 40 million drug users^[6]
^[7]^[14], and a mere 580,000 that are incarcerated for drug offenses right now^[15], which suggests that
the vast majority of these people *already are* roaming America's streets, and that this has not proven
a major problem.

Evidence also suggests that the "War on Drugs" is frequently used as a tool for racism. In
2004, 53.05% of state drug-related incarcerations were black, while 25.83% were white, and 19.97%
were hispanic^[15]. 0.07% of the white male population was incarcerated, while nearly twelve times as
many black males - 4.68% - were incarcerated^[15]. This is despite the fact that the estimated number
of black drug users is only .2% higher than that of white drug users^[7]. The demonization of
marijuana began as a racist scheme which worked much the same way as literacy clauses placed
upon voting eligibility when blacks obtained suffrage. It started in Utah in 1915, with a law against
marijuana that allowed police to prosecute roughly every Mexican-American, to whom marijuana was
a harmless cultural tradition^[16].

The End?

There have been many different agendas and reasons for the war on drugs, but the statistics
speak clearly. Prohibition of drugs is ineffective, it is extreme encroachment upon personal freedom,
it does not yield *any* increase in order, it hurts the economy, and everything about it would lead any
sensible American to believe it is wrong. But it does yield increased profits to select companies, and
it does serve as a stepping stone for political leaders claiming they are "tough on crime", and it does
give jobs to hundreds of thousands of additional law enforcement (never mind the fact that, in the
process, it takes jobs away from millions of other citizens). To the average American, however, and to
America as a whole, the "War on Drugs" provides nothing positive.

There is no doubt that many illicit drugs are a huge problem. There is no doubt that they ruin

lives. For every one of the 4,500 deaths they cause^[3], there are many more lives ruined because of the danger they pose. But the fact is we are losing the "War on Drugs". This is because it is impossible to wage war on inanimate objects. The real war is on America. The prisons are full, the checkbook is empty, and we're worse off than we've ever been. America seems to have forgotten that the "War on Drugs" was declared by a man most of America considers a crook and a liar - President Richard Nixon. Now the "War on Drugs" is taken for granted as a good thing, and rarely questioned. America would be better off if the "War on Drugs" was ended immediately. Drugs are not a military concern, but a health concern, and countries that accept this have lower crime rates and are better off for it^[17]. All of the major studies that have been done in the past 50 years have suggested decriminalization of illicit drugs^[14]. America needs to end its frivolous "War on Drugs" in favor of treatment and rehabilitation.

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