PART THREE

Perspectives

No drug, not even alcohol, causes the fundamental ills of society. If we're looking for the sources of our troubles, we shouldn't test people for drugs, we should test them for stupidity, ignorance, greed and love of power.

P. J. O'Rourke
Give War A Chance
1993

A lot of people say that we have a heavy sentence for this crime and light sentence for another crime, and what we ought to do is reduce the heavy sentence so it's more in line with the other. Wrong. In most cases we ought to increase the light sentence and make it compatible with the heavy sentence, and be serious about punishment because we are becoming too tolerant as a society.

Rush Limbaugh
Show Transcript
October 5, 1995

Academic

There's No Justice in the War on Drugs

Milton Friedman

Milton Friedman is the recipient of the 1976 Nobel Memorial Prize for economic science and a senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

This selection first appeared in the *New York Times*, January 11, 1998.

Twenty-five years ago, President Richard M. Nixon announced a "War on Drugs." I criticized the action on both moral and expedient grounds in my *Newsweek* column of May 1, 1972, "Prohibition and Drugs":

> On ethical grounds, do we have the right to use the machinery of government to prevent an individual from becoming an alcoholic or a drug addict? For children, almost everyone would answer at least a qualified yes. But for responsible adults, I, for one, would answer no. Reason with the potential addict, yes. Tell him the consequences, yes. Pray for and with him, yes. But I believe that we have no right to use force, directly or indirectly, to prevent a fellow man from committing suicide, let alone from drinking alcohol or taking drugs.

That basic ethical flaw has inevitably generated specific evils during the past quarter century, just as it did during our earlier attempt at alcohol prohibition.

1. *The use of informers.* Informers are not needed in crimes like robbery and murder because the victims of those crimes have a strong incentive to report the crime. In the drug trade, the crime consists of a transaction between a willing buyer and willing seller. Neither has any incentive to report a violation of law. On the contrary, it is

in the self-interest of both that the crime not be reported. That is why informers are needed. The use of informers and the immense sums of money at stake inevitably generate corruption—as they did during Prohibition. They also lead to violations of the civil rights of innocent people, to the shameful practices of forcible entry and forfeiture of property without due process.

As I wrote in 1972: ". . . addicts and pushers are not the only ones corrupted. Immense sums are at stake. It is inevitable that some relatively low-paid police and other government officials—and some high-paid ones as well—will succumb to the temptation to pick up easy money.

2. *Filling the prisons.* In 1970, 200,000 people were in prison. Today, 1.6 million people are. Eight times as many in absolute number, six times as many relative to the increased population. In addition, 2.3 million are on probation and parole. The attempt to prohibit drugs is by far the major source of the horrendous growth in the prison population.

There is no light at the end of that tunnel. How many of our citizens do we want to turn into criminals before we yell "enough"?

3. *Disproportionate imprisonment of blacks.* Sher Hosonko, at the time Connecticut's director of addiction services, stressed this effect of drug prohibition in a talk given in June 1995:

> Today in this country, we incarcerate 3,109 black men for every 100,000 of them in the population. Just to give you an idea of the drama in this number, our closest competitor for incarcerating black men is South Africa. South Africa—and this is pre–Nelson Mandela and under an overt public policy of apartheid—incarcerated 723 black men for every 100,000. Figure this out: In the land of the Bill of Rights, we jail over four times as many black men as the only country in the world that advertised a political policy of apartheid.

4. *Destruction of inner cities.* Drug prohibition is one of the most important factors that have combined to reduce our inner cities to

their present state. The crowded inner cities have a comparative advantage for selling drugs. Though most customers do not live in the inner cities, most sellers do. Young boys and girls view the swaggering, affluent drug dealers as role models. Compared with the returns from a traditional career of study and hard work, returns from dealing drugs are tempting to young and old alike. And many, especially the young, are not dissuaded by the bullets that fly so freely in disputes between competing drug dealers—bullets that fly only because dealing drugs is illegal. Al Capone epitomizes our earlier attempt at Prohibition; the Crips and Bloods epitomize this one.

5. *Compounding the harm to users.* Prohibition makes drugs exorbitantly expensive and highly uncertain in quality. A user must associate with criminals to get the drugs, and many are driven to become criminals themselves to finance the habit. Needles, which are hard to get, are often shared, with the predictable effect of spreading disease. Finally, an addict who seeks treatment must confess to being a criminal in order to qualify for a treatment program. Alternatively, professionals who treat addicts must become informers or criminals themselves.

6. *Undertreatment of chronic pain.* The Federal Department of Health and Human Services has issued reports showing that two thirds of all terminal cancer patients do not receive adequate pain medication, and the numbers are surely higher in nonterminally ill patients. Such serious undertreatment of chronic pain is a direct result of the Drug Enforcement Agency's pressures on physicians who prescribe narcotics.

7. *Harming foreign countries.* Our drug policy has led to thousands of deaths and enormous loss of wealth in countries like Colombia, Peru, and Mexico, and has undermined the stability of their governments. All because we cannot enforce our laws at home. If we did, there would be no market for imported drugs. There would be no Cali cartel. The foreign countries would not have to suffer the loss of sovereignty involved in letting our "advisers" and troops operate

on their soil, search their vessels, and encourage local militaries to shoot down their planes. They could run their own affairs, and we, in turn, could avoid the diversion of military forces from their proper function.

Can any policy, however high-minded, be moral if it leads to widespread corruption, imprisons so many, has so racist an effect, destroys our inner cities, wreaks havoc on misguided and vulnerable individuals, and brings death and destruction to foreign countries?

Don't Surrender: The drug war worked once. It can again.

William J. Bennett

William J. Bennett is a distinguished fellow at the Heritage Foundation and served as the first national drug czar in the Reagan administration.

This selection originally appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, May 15, 2001.

George W. Bush recently announced the nomination of John P. Walters to serve as the director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. The new "drug czar" is being asked to lead the nation's war on illegal drugs at a time when many are urging surrender.

The forms of surrender are manifold: Buzzwords like "harm reduction" are crowding out clear no-use messages. State initiatives promoting "medical marijuana" are little more than thinly veiled legalization efforts. The film *Traffic* portrayed the war on drugs as a futile effort. In a recent survey by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 74% of Americans believe the war on drugs is a failure.

And yet recent history shows that, far from being a failure, drug-control programs are among the most successful public-policy efforts of the later half of the 20th century. According to a national drug survey, between 1979 and 1992, the most intense period of antidrug efforts, the rate of illegal drug use dropped by more than half, while marijuana use decreased by two-thirds. Cocaine use dropped by three-fourths between 1985 and 1992.

Why is this record described as a failure? For those who would legalize drugs, all drug-control efforts must be painted as disastrous.

But for most Americans, frustration with the drug issue stems from the fact that over the past eight years we have lost ground.

During the Clinton administration, our nation's drug policy suffered a period of malign neglect. President Clinton's two clearest statements about illegal drugs were his infamous statement "I didn't inhale" and his immediate and dramatic cut in the size of the federal antidrug staff. Morale and political leadership were both compromised, and a national cynicism about drug use resulted.

Hiring a four-star general may have fooled the public and the Washington press corps for a while, but it didn't add up to a meaningful program.

To paraphrase Arthur Miller, attention was not paid, and the problem quickly worsened: Between 1992 and 1999, rates of current drug use—defined as using once a month or more—increased by 15%. Rates of marijuana use increased 11%. The situation was far worse among our children: Lifetime use of illegal drugs increased by 37% among eighth-graders and 55% among 10th-graders. We have reached the point where more than one-quarter of all high school seniors are current users of illegal drugs; indeed, rates of monthly drug use among high school seniors increased 86% between 1992 and 1999.

We must re-engage this fight. What we were doing in the 1980s and early 1990s—vigorous law enforcement and interdiction coupled with effective prevention and treatment—worked. It can work again.

The most important component of any antidrug strategy is prevention. Children who reach the age of 21 without using illegal drugs are almost certain never to do so. The Partnership for a Drug-Free America has crafted some of the most memorable and effective advertisements in history, encouraging children to turn down illegal drugs. The message that drug use is dangerous and immoral is the essential key to prevention.

In addition, we must continue to develop effective treatment programs. Many criticisms have been leveled at America's lack of treat-

ment capacity, but more troubling is the lack of treatment efficacy. However, 12-step programs (akin to Alcoholics Anonymous) have been shown to be both inexpensive and effective in private-sector drug treatment. Hopefully, their success can be extended to public-sector treatment as well.

Everyone agrees on the necessity of effective treatment and strong prevention efforts. Some people, however, believe that law enforcement should have no role in the process. This is an altogether simplistic model: Demand reduction cannot be effective without supply reduction.

It is true that there will always be a supply of illegal drugs as long as there is a demand. But forceful interdiction can help to increase the price and decrease the purity of drugs available, a critical means of intervening in the lives of addicts, who can only beg, borrow, and steal so much to support their habit. Government reports document that recovering addicts are more likely to relapse when faced with cheap, plentiful drugs. Aggressive interdiction efforts, then, are not supply reduction so much as the first step in demand reduction.

Some people will admit that there is a place for law enforcement, but contend we spend too much on this effort, to the detriment of demand reduction. In fact, according to Robert DuPont, who led the nation's antidrug efforts under Presidents Nixon and Ford, there has never been as much federal money spent on prevention education as is being spent today. The United States' total spending on drug-demand reduction far exceeds the amounts spent in the rest of the world combined.

A more pragmatic point: While treatment is often centered at the individual and local levels, interdiction and law enforcement must be federal responsibilities. Given the scope and complexity of drug trafficking, the federal government can and must assume the responsibility for stopping the traffic of drugs across and within our borders. The drug czar's first concerns, then, must be interdiction and law

enforcement, if only because they are tasks no other agency can perform as effectively.

I believe that the position of drug czar ought to remain at the cabinet level, but more important is the president's personal support and commitment to the office. I had that backing, and I expect the new drug czar will enjoy that same support and commitment from Mr. Bush. If Mr. Walters is to have any success, he must enjoy it.

The past eight years are, once again, illustrative: Gen. Barry McCaffrey never enjoyed that support from President Clinton. In renewing the drug war, the new drug czar will not be alone. He will be able to draw on the assistance of people—parents, teachers, substance-abuse counselors, clergymen, and elected officials—who have continued to fight drug use over the past eight years. These groups are our first lines of defense; without them, the regression since 1992 would have been far worse. Their dedication gives the lie to the gospel of futility.

I look forward to America re-engaging in the war on drugs—and continuing the success that we had between 1980 and 1992.

Flashback

An Open Letter to Bill Bennett

Milton Friedman

This selection first appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, September 7, 1989.

Dear Bill: In Oliver Cromwell's eloquent words, "I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken" about the course you and President Bush urge us to adopt to fight drugs. The path you propose of more police, more jails, use of the military in foreign countries, harsh penalties for drug users, and a whole panoply of repressive measures can only make a bad situation worse. The drug war cannot be won by those tactics without undermining the human liberty and individual freedom that you and I cherish.

You are not mistaken in believing that drugs are a scourge that is devastating our society. You are not mistaken in believing that drugs are tearing asunder our social fabric, ruining the lives of many young people, and imposing heavy costs on some of the most disadvantaged among us. You are not mistaken in believing that the majority of the public share your concerns. In short, you are not mistaken in the end you seek to achieve.

Your mistake is failing to recognize that the very measures you favor are a major source of the evils you deplore. Of course the problem is demand, but it is not only demand, it is demand that must operate through repressed and illegal channels. Illegality creates obscene profits that finance the murderous tactics of the drug lords; illegality leads to the corruption of law enforcement officials; illegality monopolizes the efforts of honest law forces so that they are starved for resources to fight the simpler crimes of robbery, theft, and assault.

Drugs are a tragedy for addicts. But criminalizing their use converts that tragedy into a disaster for society, for users and non-users alike. Our experience with the prohibition of drugs is a replay of our experience with the prohibition of alcoholic beverages. I append excerpts from a column that I wrote in 1972 on "Prohibition and Drugs."

The major problem then was heroin from Marseilles; today, it is cocaine from Latin America. Today, also, the problem is far more serious than it was 17 years ago: more addicts, more innocent victims; more drug pushers, more law enforcement officials; more money spent to enforce prohibition, more money spent to circumvent prohibition.

Had drugs been decriminalized 17 years ago, "crack" would never have been invented (it was invented because the high cost of illegal drugs made it profitable to provide a cheaper version) and there would today be far fewer addicts. The lives of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of innocent victims would have been saved, and not only in the United States. The ghettos of our major cities would not be drug-and-crime-infested no-man's lands. Fewer people would be in jails, and fewer jails would have been built.

Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru would not be suffering from narco-terror, and we would not be distorting our foreign policy because of narco-terror. Hell would not, in the words with which Billy Sunday welcomed Prohibition, "be forever for rent," but it would be a lot emptier.

Decriminalizing drugs is even more urgent now than in 1972, but we must recognize that the harm done in the interim cannot be wiped out, certainly not immediately. Postponing decriminalization will only make matters worse, and make the problem appear even more intractable.

Alcohol and tobacco cause many more deaths in users than do drugs. Decriminalization would not prevent us from treating drugs as we now treat alcohol and tobacco: prohibiting sales of drugs to

minors, outlawing the advertising of drugs, and similar measures. Such measures could be enforced, while outright prohibition cannot be. Moreover, if even a small fraction of the money we now spend on trying to enforce drug prohibition were devoted to treatment and rehabilitation, in an atmosphere of compassion not punishment, the reduction in drug usage and in the harm done to the users could be dramatic.

This plea comes from the bottom of my heart. Every friend of freedom, and I know you are one, must be as revolted as I am by the prospect of turning the United States into an armed camp, by the vision of jails filled with casual drug users and of an army of enforcers empowered to invade the liberty of citizens on slight evidence. A country in which shooting down unidentified planes "on suspicion" can be seriously considered as a drug-war tactic is not the kind of United States that either you or I want to hand on to future generations.

Should Drugs Be Legalized?

William J. Bennett

This selection originally appeared in the *Reader's Digest*, March 1990.

Since I took command of the war on drugs, I have learned from former Secretary of State George Shultz that our concept of fighting drugs is "flawed." The only thing to do, he says, is to "make it possible for addicts to buy drugs at some regulated place." Conservative commentator William F. Buckley Jr. suggests I should be "fatalistic" about the flood of cocaine from South America and simply "let it in." Syndicated columnist Mike Royko contends it would be easier to sweep junkies out of the gutters "than to fight a hopeless war" against the narcotics that send them there. Labeling our efforts "bankrupt," federal judge Robert W. Sweet opts for legalization, saying, "If our society can learn to stop using butter, it should be able to cut down on cocaine."

Flawed, fatalistic, hopeless, bankrupt! I never realized surrender was so fashionable until I assumed this post.

Though most Americans are overwhelmingly determined to go toe-to-toe with the foreign drug lords and neighborhood pushers, a small minority believe that enforcing drug laws imposes greater costs on society than do drugs themselves. Like addicts seeking immediate euphoria, the legalizers want peace at any price, even though it means the inevitable proliferation of a practice that degrades, impoverishes, and kills.

I am acutely aware of the burdens drug enforcement places upon

us. It consumes economic resources we would like to use elsewhere. It is sometimes frustrating, thankless, and often dangerous. But the consequences of *not* enforcing drug laws would be far more costly. Those consequences involve the intrinsically destructive nature of drugs and the toll they exact from our society in hundreds of thousands of lost and broken lives . . . human potential never realized . . . time stolen from families and jobs . . . precious spiritual and economic resources squandered.

That is precisely why virtually every civilized society has found it necessary to exert some form of control over mind-altering substances and why this war is so important. Americans feel up to their hips in drugs now. They would be up to their necks under legalization.

Even limited experiments in drug legalization have shown that when drugs are more widely available, addiction skyrockets. In 1975 Italy liberalized its drug law and now has one of the highest heroin-related death rates in Western Europe. In Alaska, where marijuana was decriminalized in 1975, the easy atmosphere has increased usage of the drug, particularly among children. Nor does it stop there. Some Alaskan schoolchildren now tout "coca puffs," marijuana cigarettes laced with cocaine.

Many legalizers concede that drug legalization might increase use, but they shrug off the matter. "It may well be that there would be more addicts, and I would regret that result," says Nobel laureate economist Milton Friedman. The late Harvard Medical School psychiatry professor Norman Zinberg, a long-time proponent of "responsible" drug use, admitted that "use of now illicit drugs would certainly increase. Also, casualties probably would increase."

In fact, Dr. Herbert D. Kleber of Yale University, my deputy in charge of demand reduction, predicts legalization might cause "a five-to-sixfold increase" in cocaine use. But legalizers regard this as a necessary price for the "benefits" of legalization. What benefits?

1. *Legalization will take the profit out of drugs.* The result supposedly will be the end of criminal drug pushers and the big foreign

drug wholesalers, who will turn to other enterprises because nobody will need to make furtive and dangerous trips to his local pusher.

But what, exactly, would the brave new world of legalized drugs look like? Buckley stresses that "adults get to buy the stuff at carefully regulated stores." (Would you want one in *your* neighborhood?) Others, like Friedman, suggest we sell the drugs at "ordinary retail outlets."

Former City University of New York sociologist Georgette Bennett assures us that "brand-name competition will be prohibited" and that strict quality control and proper labeling will be overseen by the Food and Drug Administration. In a touching egalitarian note, she adds that "free drugs will be provided at government clinics" for addicts too poor to buy them.

Almost all the legalizers point out that the price of drugs will fall, even though the drugs will be heavily taxed. Buckley, for example, argues that somehow federal drugstores will keep the price "low enough to discourage a black market but high enough to accumulate a surplus to be used for drug education."

Supposedly, drug sales will generate huge amounts of revenue, which will then be used to tell the public not to use drugs and to treat those who don't listen.

In reality, this tax would only allow government to *share* the drug profits now garnered by criminals. Legalizers would have to tax drugs heavily in order to pay for drug education and treatment programs. Criminals could undercut the official price and still make huge profits. What alternative would the government have? Cut the price until it was within the lunch-money budget of the average sixth-grade student?

2. *Legalization will eliminate the black market.* Wrong. And not just because the regulated prices could be undercut. Many legalizers admit that drugs such as crack or PCP are simply too dangerous to allow the shelter of the law. Thus criminals will provide what the government will not. "As long as drugs that people very much want

remain illegal, a black market will exist," says legalization advocate David Boaz of the libertarian Cato Institute.

Look at crack. In powdered form, cocaine was an expensive indulgence. But street chemists found that a better and far less expensive—and far more dangerous—high could be achieved by mixing cocaine with baking soda and heating it. Crack was born, and "cheap" coke invaded low-income communities with furious speed.

An ounce of powdered cocaine might sell on the street for $1200. That same ounce can produce 370 vials of crack at $10 each. Ten bucks seems like a cheap hit, but crack's intense ten- to fifteen-minute high is followed by an unbearable depression. The user wants more crack, thus starting a rapid and costly descent into addiction.

If government drugstores do not stock crack, addicts will find it in the clandestine market or simply bake it themselves from their legally purchased cocaine.

Currently, crack is being laced with insecticides and animal tranquilizers to heighten its effect. Emergency rooms are now warned to expect victims of "sandwiches" and "moon rocks," life-threatening smokable mixtures of heroin and crack. Unless the government is prepared to sell these deadly variations of dangerous drugs, it will perpetuate a criminal black market by default.

And what about children and teenagers? They would obviously be barred from drug purchases, just as they are prohibited from buying beer and liquor. But pushers will continue to cater to these young customers with the old, favorite come-ons—a couple of free fixes to get them hooked, and what good will anti-drug education be when these youngsters observe their older brothers and sisters, parents and friends lighting up and shooting up with government permission?

Legalization will give us the worst of both worlds: millions of *new* drug users *and* a thriving criminal black market.

3. *Legalization will dramatically reduce crime.* "It is the high price of drugs that leads addicts to robbery, murder, and other crimes," says Ira Glasser, executive director of the American Civil

Liberties Union. A study by the Cato Institute concludes: "Most, if not all, 'drug-related murders' are the result of drug prohibition."

But researchers tell us that many drug-related felonies are committed by people involved in crime *before* they started taking drugs. The drugs, so routinely available in criminal circles, make the criminals more violent and unpredictable.

Certainly there are some kill-for-a-fix crimes, but does any rational person believe that a cut-rate price for drugs at a government outlet will stop such psychopathic behavior? The fact is that under the influence of drugs, normal people do not act normally, and abnormal people behave in chilling and horrible ways. DEA agents told me about a teenage addict in Manhattan who was smoking crack when he sexually abused and caused permanent internal injuries to his one-month-old daughter.

Children are among the most frequent victims of violent, drug-related crimes that have nothing to do with the cost of acquiring the drugs. In Philadelphia in 1987 more than half the child-abuse fatalities involved at least one parent who was a heavy drug user. Seventy-three percent of the child-abuse deaths in New York City in 1987 involved parental drug use.

In my travels to the ramparts of the drug war, I have seen nothing to support the legalizers' argument that lower drug prices would reduce crime. Virtually everywhere I have gone, police and DEA agents have told me that crime rates are highest where crack is cheapest.

4. *Drug use should be legal since users only harm themselves.* Those who believe this should stand beside the medical examiner as he counts the thirty-six bullet wounds in the shattered corpse of a three-year-old who happened to get in the way of his mother's drug-crazed boyfriend. They should visit the babies abandoned by cocaine-addicted mothers—infants who already carry the ravages of addiction in their own tiny bodies. They should console the devastated relatives of the nun who worked in a homeless shelter and was stabbed to

death by a crack addict enraged that she would not stake him to a fix.

Do drug addicts only harm themselves? Here is a former cocaine addict describing the compulsion that quickly draws even the most "responsible" user into irresponsible behavior: "Everything is about getting high, and any means necessary to get there becomes rational. If it means stealing something from somebody close to you, lying to your family, borrowing money from people you know you can't pay back, writing checks you know you can't cover, you do all those things—things that are totally against everything you have ever believed in."

Society pays for this behavior, and not just in bigger insurance premiums, losses from accidents, and poor job performance. We pay in the loss of a priceless social currency as families are destroyed, trust between friends is betrayed, and promising careers are never fulfilled. I cannot imagine sanctioning behavior that would increase that toll.

I find no merit in the legalizers' case. The simple fact is that drug use is wrong. And the moral argument, in the end, is the most compelling argument. A citizen in a drug-induced haze, whether on his backyard deck or on a mattress in a ghetto crack house, is not what the founding fathers meant by the "pursuit of happiness." Despite the legalizers' argument that drug use is a matter of "personal freedom," our nation's notion of liberty is rooted in the ideal of a self-reliant citizenry. Helpless wrecks in treatment centers, men chained by their noses to cocaine—these people are slaves.

Imagine if, in the darkest days of 1940, Winston Churchill had rallied the West by saying, "This war looks hopeless, and besides, it will cost too much. Hitler can't be *that* bad. Let's surrender and see what happens." That is essentially what we hear from the legalizers.

This war *can* be won. I am heartened by indications that education and public revulsion are having an effect on drug use. The National Institute on Drug Abuse's latest survey of current users shows a 37 percent *decrease* in drug consumption since 1985. Cocaine is

down 50 percent; marijuana use among young people is at its lowest rate since 1972. In my travels I've been encouraged by signs that Americans are fighting back.

I am under no illusion that such developments, however hopeful, mean the war is over. We need to involve more citizens in the fight, increase pressure on drug criminals and build on antidrug programs that have proved to work. This will not be easy. But the moral and social costs of surrender are simply too great to contemplate.

Media

Just Say No: Government's War on Drugs Fails

John Stossel

John Stossel is co-anchor of ABC News's 20/20.

This selection first appeared on an ABCNEWS.com original report (July 30, 2002, available online at http://abcnews.go.com/onair/2020/stossel_drugs_020730.html).

July 30—Have you ever used illegal drugs? The government says a third of Americans have at some point—and about 5 percent use them regularly.

The number may be higher, because how many people honestly answer the question, "Have you used an illicit drug in the past month?"

What should America do about this? So far, our approach has been to go to war—a war that police departments fight every day. A war that U.S. politicians tackle in a different way than their European counterparts. And a war that is not going away.

Asa Hutchinson, President Bush's choice to run the Drug Enforcement Administration, travels the world telling Americans that we're winning the drug war. "Overall drug use in the United States has been reduced by 50 percent over the last 20 years," he says.

But it's questionable whether the fall is attributable to the government's policies, or whether it was just people getting smarter after the binges of the 1970s. In the last 10 years drug use hasn't dropped—despite federal spending on the drug war rising 50 percent. And despite all the seizures, drugs are still as available as they ever were.

Hutchinson agrees that there are problems with the government's efforts. "We have flat-lined. I believe we lost our focus to a certain extent," he says. "I don't believe that we had the same type of energy devoted to it as we have in certain times in the past."

Detroit Police Chief Jerry Oliver is not convinced that expending more energy—and making more drug arrests—will help America win the crusade. "We will never arrest our way out of this problem," he says. "All you have to do is go to almost any corner in any city. It will tell you that . . ."

"Clearly, we're losing the war on drugs in this country [and] it's insanity to keep doing the same thing over and over again."

SEDUCED BY MONEY

We know the terrible things drugs can do. We've seen the despair, the sunken face of the junkie. No wonder those in government say that we have to fight drugs. And polls show most Americans agree. Drug use should be illegal. Or as former "drug czar" Bill Bennett put it: "It's a matter of right and wrong."

But when "right and wrong" conflict with supply and demand, nasty things happen. The government declaring drugs illegal doesn't mean people can't get them, it just means they get them on the black market, where they pay much more for them.

"The only reason that coke is worth that much money is that it's illegal," argues Father Joseph Kane, a priest in a drug-ravaged Bronx neighborhood in New York City. "Pure cocaine is three times the cost of gold. Now if that's the case, how are you gonna stop people from selling cocaine?"

Kane has come to believe that while drug abuse is bad, drug prohibition is worse—because the black market does horrible things to his community. "There's so much money in it, it's staggering," he says.

Orange County, Calif., Superior Court Judge James Gray agrees

with Kane. He spent years locking drug dealers up, but concluded it's pointless, because drug prohibition makes the drugs so absurdly valuable. "We are recruiting children in the Bronx, in the barrios, and all over the nation, because of drug money," he says.

Besides luring kids into the underworld, drug money is also corrupting law enforcement officers, he argues.

Cops are seduced by drug money. They have been for years. "With all the money, with all the cash, it's easy for [dealers] to purchase police officers, to purchase prosecutors, to purchase judges," says Oliver, the Detroit police chief.

The worst unintended consequence of the drug war is drug crime. Films like *Reefer Madness* told us that people take drugs and just go crazy. But, in reality people rarely go crazy or become violent because they're high.

The violence happens because dealers arm themselves and have shootouts over turf. Most of the drug-related violence comes from the fact that it's illegal, argues Kane. Violence also happens because addicts steal to pay the high prices for drugs.

AN ALTERNATIVE TO PROHIBITION

There's no question that drugs often wreck lives. But the drug war wrecks lives too, creates crime, and costs billions of dollars.

Is there an alternative? Much of Europe now says there is.

In Amsterdam, using marijuana is legal. Holland now has hundreds of "coffee shops" where marijuana is officially tolerated. Clients pick up small amounts of marijuana the same way they would pick up a bottle of wine at the store.

The police regulate marijuana sales—shops may sell no more than about five joints worth per person, they're not allowed to sell to minors, and no hard drugs are allowed.

What has been the result of legalizing marijuana? Is everyone

getting stoned? No. In America today 38 percent of adolescents have smoked pot—in Holland, it's only 20 percent.

What Amsterdam police did was take the glamour out of drug use, explains Judge Gray. The Dutch minister of health has said, "We've succeeded in making pot boring."

The DEA has said legalizing cannabis and hash in the Netherlands was a failure—an unmitigated disaster. Not so, say people in Amsterdam. And Rotterdam Police Superintendent Jur Verbeek says selling the drug in coffee shops may deter young, curious people who will try marijuana one way or another, from further experimentation with harder drugs.

"When there are no coffee shops, they will go to the illegal houses, where the dealer says, 'OK, you want to have marijuana. Good. But we have cocaine as well. And we have heroin for you,'" Verbeek argues.

DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL

Still, in America, there's little interest in legalizing any drug. President Bush says "drug use threatens everything." And officials talk about fighting a stronger war. Some say it shouldn't be even talked about.

In 1991, Joycelyn Elders, who would become President Clinton's surgeon general, dared to suggest legalization might reduce crime. Critics almost immediately called for her resignation. "How can you ever fix anything if you can't even talk about it?" Elders says.

What the Dutch are doing makes sense to Gray. "They're addressing it as managers," he says. "We address it as moralizers. We address it as a character issue, and if you fail that test, we put you in prison."

Experiments with being more permissive of drugs have spread beyond the Netherlands. Today, police in most of Europe ignore marijuana use. Spain, Italy, and Luxembourg have decriminalized most drug use.

That's not to say that all the experiments succeed everywhere. Switzerland once tried what became known as Needle Park, a place where anyone could use any drug. It attracted crime because it became a magnet for junkies from all over Europe.

Critics say the Netherlands has become an island of drug use. But while illegal selling still happens, the use of drugs in the Netherlands and all Europe is still far lower than in the United States, and European countries are proposing even more liberalization.

American politicians have shown little interest in that.

"We in America should have a different approach," explains Hutchinson. "You do not win in these efforts by giving in."

HOPELESS FIGHT?

Still, how many wars can America fight? Now that we're at war against terrorism, can we also afford to fight a drug war against millions of our own people? Is it wise to fight on two fronts?

The last time America engaged in a war of this length was Vietnam, and then, too, government put a positive spin on success of the war.

But today more people have doubts. Judge Gray questions the government's ability to protect us from ourselves. "It makes as much sense to me to put actor Robert Downey Jr. in jail for his drug abuse as it would have Betty Ford in jail for her alcohol abuse. It's really no different."

Gray advocates holding people accountable for what they do—not for what they put into their bodies.

Why not sell drugs like we do alcohol, he says, though maybe with more restrictions. "Let's make it available to adults. Brown packaging, no glamour, take the illegal money out of it and then furnish it, holding people accountable for what they do," he suggests. "These drugs are too dangerous not to control."

Legal drugs—that's a frightening thought. Maybe more people would try them.

Gray says even if they did, that would do less harm than the war we've been fighting for the past thirty years.

"What we're doing now has failed. In fact it's hopeless," he argues. "This is a failed system that we simply must change."

A War Worth Fighting

Lou Dobbs

Lou Dobbs is the anchor and managing editor of CNN's "Lou Dobbs Tonight."

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We've spent hundreds of billions of dollars on law enforcement, prevention, and treatment since President Richard Nixon declared the war on drugs in 1971. Yet the use of illicit drugs continues to plague our country. The federal government spends nearly $1 billion a month to fight the war on drugs, but users spend more than 5 times that much a month to buy drugs.

Beyond the horrific human toll of 20,000 drug-induced deaths each year, illegal drugs cost our economy more than $280 billion annually, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Incredibly, there are those who choose to ignore the human devastation and the economic cost of the drug plague. Many of them are pseudo-sophisticated Baby Boomers who consider themselves superior and hip in their wry, reckless disregard of the facts. They may also smoke marijuana, advocate its legalization, and rationalize cocaine by calling it a recreational drug.

And there is a surprising list of libertarians and conservatives, including William F. Buckley and Nobel laureate economist Milton Friedman, who advocate the legalization or decriminalization of drugs.

Another Nobel laureate, Gary S. Becker, professor of economics

at the University of Chicago, told me: "It [legalization] would certainly save a lot of resources for society. We could tax drug use so it could even lead to government revenue. . . . We would be able to greatly cut the number of people in prison, which would save resources for state and local government."

But the cost of drug abuse goes well beyond the expense to control supply and demand. Drug users cost the country $160 billion each year in lost productivity. Parental substance abuse is responsible for $10 billion of the $14 billion spent nationally each year on child welfare costs. And drugs are involved in 7 out of every 10 cases of child abuse and neglect.

Pete Wilson, the former governor of California, is a strong opponent of drug legalization. Mr. Wilson says the problem that advocates of legalization fail to acknowledge is that drugs are addictive in nature, and are therefore not just another commodity.

"Drugs did not become viewed as bad because they are illegal," Mr. Wilson says. "Rather, they became illegal because they are clearly bad."

Although the war on drugs certainly has not captured the American public's attention to the extent that it should, there has been success in efforts to curb drug use and supply. According to the University of Michigan's "Monitoring the Future" study, the percentage of high-school seniors who reported using any drug within the past month decreased from 39 percent in 1978 to 26 percent in 2001. There are a total of 9 million fewer drug users in America now than there were in 1979. And coca cultivation was 15 percent lower in Colombia in 2002, due to the combined efforts of the United States and Colombian governments.

Drug czar John Walters, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, is optimistic about the war on drugs.

"We have to remember that, since we got serious in the '80s, overall drug use is half of what it was—and that's progress," Mr. Walters told me last week.

I would say that is quite a lot of progress. But the job is only half done.

Law Enforcement

The Drug War: The American Junkie

Joseph D. McNamara

Joseph D. McNamara is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and the former police chief of San Jose, California.

This selection originally appeared in the *Hoover Digest*—2004 No. 2 (Stanford, Calif: Hoover Institution Press, 2004).

The average white American's image of drug users is that of dangerous young people of color—males who will rob them to obtain money to buy drugs or youthful black female prostitutes spreading disease and delivering crack babies as a result of enslavement to drugs. These cherished misconceptions are the enduring and erroneous foundations of the ill-conceived "war on drugs."

Actually, the overwhelming majority of American drug users have historically been Caucasians. The fact that minorities are arrested and incarcerated at vastly disproportionate rates for drug offenses contributes to false stereotypes and permits the continuation of one of the most irrational public policies in the history of the United States. Blacks make up approximately 15 percent of America's drug users, but more than one-third of adults arrested for drug violations are black. Similar distortions in drug arrests and incarcerations apply to Hispanics.

Relatively few of America's estimated 90 million illegal drug users go on to commit non-drug crimes. In fact, the majority of police I hired during my 18 years as police chief in two of the largest cities in America admitted prior use of illegal drugs. They did not commit other crimes and grew out of their early drug use. As one candidate

put it to me, "Of course, I smoked pot. I was in the Army. I went to college."

And I can remember, some forty years ago, as a young policeman in Harlem, gathering with my colleagues in a tavern after work, listening to them complain vigorously about the junkies who made our work so difficult. During our discussions, we drank prodigious amounts of beer without the slightest awareness that we were consuming a drug that could be as lethal as heroin. Indeed, far more of my fellow police died in driving accidents after these drinking sessions than were slain in the line of duty.

Even today, ninety years after the federal government first outlawed narcotics with the Harrison Narcotic Act, December 17, 1914, public and police attitudes toward the dangerousness of drugs are shaped by ignorance of their impact and by mistaken prejudices regarding their users. Stereotypes created more than a century ago by nativist American elites targeting blacks, immigrant Irish, German, Italian, and Jewish populations and their "strange" religions, languages, and cultures led to anti-drug legislation.

President Theodore Roosevelt, who held many of the same racial, ethnic, and class biases, greatly encouraged the anti-drug groups. Roosevelt, who was not an alcohol prohibitionist, was motivated by an anti-opium attitude, as well as by a desire to develop America into one of the great world powers. He hoped that stopping England, France, Holland, and Spain from compelling the unwilling China to accept highly profitable (for the exporting nations) opium shipments would win Chinese goodwill and allow Americans to compete with the colonial trading nations in opening the vast China market to other goods.

Despite revelations from Rush Limbaugh, Bill Clinton, Al Gore, John Kerry, Newt Gingrich, and George W. Bush (when questioned about prior drug use he didn't deny it, simply said that he did young and foolish things), our government continues to paint users of certain chemicals as evil and immoral, when in fact they often are suc-

cessful people from across the political spectrum. Luckily for most of them, they didn't get busted under today's draconian laws and were able to mature into careers that most of us can admire.

A DRUG-FREE AMERICA?

For the first 140 years of this republic, the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness included the right to consume whatever substance one pleased. In fact, Thomas Jefferson criticized France for passing laws regulating diet and drugs on the basis that "a government that tries to control what kind of food you eat and medicine that you take will soon try to control how you think."

The idea that pleasure could be derived from sex, gambling, dancing, consumption of alcohol, or other drugs struck many influential groups as sinful and immoral. In *The Symbolic Crusade*, the sociologist Joseph Gusfield described how these same biased irrationalities led to passage of the failed Eighteenth Amendment, the criminal prohibition of alcohol.

This odd tendency to impose the heavy hand of criminal law to "sinful" and "immoral" behavior leads to numerous anomalies. For one thing, it diverts scarce resources from pursuing de facto crimes such as murder, assault, rape, theft, and the increasing threat of terrorism. In addition, individuals taking Prozac, Valium, or other psychoactive prescription drugs are regarded as patients. Yet millions of our own citizens using heroin, cocaine, or marijuana have been, and are still, regarded as dangerous enough to be caged in brutal prisons, frequently under mandatory sentences more characteristic of a totalitarian society than a democracy. State and local police alone average around 1,600,000 drug arrests a year. All except a couple of hundred thousand are for possession of small amounts of drugs but nevertheless frequently trigger long mandatory prison sentences.

The impetus for the passage of the Harrison Narcotic Act of 1914 came from the lobbying efforts of American missionary societies in

China. These groups enlisted the aid of other alcohol temperance organizations and religious groups in the United States to get their version of sin written into the penal code. The anti-drug arguments advocating the Harrison Act were replete with statements claiming that it was the duty of whites to save the inferior races. Those moving to criminalize drugs made references to Negroes under the influence of drugs murdering whites, degenerate Mexicans smoking marijuana, and "Chinamen" seducing white women with drugs. This racist nonsense would be laughed at today, but it was quite influential in the passage of anti-drug legislation.

Dr. David Musto, the renowned drug historian and professor of child psychiatry and the history of medicine at the Yale University School of Medicine, wrote in *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotics Control*, "Consequently, the story of the Harrison Act's passage contains many examples of the South's fear of the Negro as a ground for permitting a deviation from the strict interpretation of the Constitution." Musto also noted that opium use in the United States had been declining for about 16 years before the federal government saw fit to outlaw it.

The Harrison Narcotic Act of 1914 represented a gross departure from past federal practice of not interfering with state police powers. The racist arguments convinced southern representatives, who were reluctant to acknowledge federal power over states' rights, to vote for the act. Uneasiness regarding the law's constitutionality caused Congress to label the act a revenue measure, but in 1925, the U.S. Supreme Court correctly interpreted it as a penal statute, making it the cornerstone of laws leading to the present "war on drugs." Similarly, queasiness over constitutionality led Congress to label the 1937 law prohibiting marijuana, the Marijuana Tax Act.

It is one of the ironies of history that national black political leadership today paradoxically seems to accept the racist implications of white southern politicians in 1914: that Negroes were especially susceptible to the negative impact of drug use. With the notable

exception of Kurt Schmoke, former mayor of Baltimore, who called for the medicalization of drug use, many African-American politicians describe decriminalization of drugs as racial genocide, thus subliminally reinforcing fears that people of color are more susceptible to drug use and the harm it can cause.

GOVERNMENT THOUGHT CONTROL

The Harrison Act was a remarkably radical change in public policy. Racism, religious pressure, and an elitist concern to ensure that the lower classes were protected from temptations to lead "immoral" lives prevailed over the promises of the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson's fears of government thought control have come to fruition in the drug war.

That may sound far-fetched, but the Clinton White House was embarrassed when a journalist disclosed that the government had been secretly paying television entertainment and news programs, magazines, and newspapers to covertly insert "correct" material on drug use for our education. Now the government openly spends millions of dollars on simplistic anti-drug ads during the television Super Bowl extravaganza, right alongside commercial ads pushing beer, drugs to cure erectile dysfunction and other real or imagined illnesses, and food that the government itself has labeled as dangerously unhealthy.

WHAT PRICE GLORY?

Since 1914, American drug control efforts have ebbed and peaked. However, a sea change occurred in 1972 when Richard Nixon saw political advantage in telling the citizenry that a war against drugs was necessary. The federal budget for the war was roughly $101 million that year. Presently, it is around $20 *billion* a year. By comparison, the average monthly Social Security retirement check in 1972

was $177. Presently, the payment averages slightly more than $900 a month. If, however, Social Security benefits had increased at the same rate as drug war spending, today's check would be around $30,000 a month. The annual cost of the drug war exceeds $40 billion a year when state and local costs are added to federal costs.

The magnitude of increase and paucity of positive results have recently begun to cause concern among some of the leading academic supporters of the drug war. A major focus of government strategy has been to reduce foreign production of illegal drugs. Yet a dozen years after the U.S. Congress proclaimed that we would have a drug-free America by 1995 (the United Nations has made an even more grandiose claim for a drug-free world), opium production has doubled in Southeast Asia and cocaine crops have increased by a third in Central and South America. Opium production has also greatly increased in liberated Afghanistan.

Periodic government announcements of epidemic increases in the use of "designer drugs" such as methamphetamines and ecstasy are intended to mobilize more public support for the drug war. What the anti-drug propaganda really illustrates, however, is the futility of attempts by the United States to reduce world drug production since domestically produced drugs are quickly substituted. The government has been forced to concede that, despite intensive efforts at interdiction, around 90 percent of the illegal drugs that arrive in this country are undetected.

The United States, as well as most of the world, is awash in illegal drugs, the violence of the illegal drug black market, and unprecedented police and political corruption resulting from the extreme markup caused by the prohibition of cheaply produced chemical substances.

AN UNCONSCIONABLE WAR

Reasonable people agree that all drugs—including aspirin and others sold over the counter or those prescribed by physicians—present potential danger to users, especially to children, and should be approached with caution. However, the sheer irrationality of continuing to expand a policy doomed to failure begs an explanation. A jihad comes to mind—a holy war that must be fought regardless of the resulting human horrors. A subcommittee of the National Academy of Sciences, in response to a request from the Clinton administration to analyze the effectiveness of the nation's efforts to control drugs, concluded last year that it was "unconscionable" for the government to implement a program of this "magnitude" without measuring its impact. Predictably, this group of researchers recommended more research on the drug war's impact, not a cease-fire.

Nonetheless, some scholars, bureaucrats, prosecutors, judges, and politicians who can no longer ignore the injustices of long mandatory drug sentences for minor offenders, and the inevitable failure of past practices, now proclaim a new more "humane" solution. The government is eagerly expanding "coerced abstinence" as a compassionate alternative. Coerced abstinence is the practice of continuously drug-testing convicted criminals (and eventually, in all probability, many others), by special drug courts, to detect the presence of illegal drugs in their bodies. In March 2004, a physician who prescribed OxyContin (oxycodone HCl controlled-release) for pain relief reported that a blood test indicated the patient had *not* been taking the medicine. The patient was arrested in the doctor's office.

PRESUMPTION OF INNOCENCE?

Many judges, who traditionally functioned as impartial legal experts to guarantee due process of law, have now become shamans taking on the responsibilities of judging who is falling under evil spells. We

have legions of real-life "Judge Judys" routinely operating with religious fervor, denouncing and incarcerating people not on the basis of crimes they committed but because certain chemicals are present in their urine. Of course, it's for their own "good," but some critics call it life on the installment plan.

Scholars who know well the difference between correlation and causation have causally disregarded two axioms of behavioral science by advancing coerced abstinence as new when, in fact, it is the same old demonization of certain drugs present in our culture and the same dehumanization of their users.

It is true that many individuals convicted of crime do have a history of previous use of illegal drugs. But high correlations of illegitimacy, illiteracy, extreme poverty, lack of health care, child abuse, failure in school, smoking, gambling, unhealthy diets, poor employment history, and a host of other variables are also present in criminal populations. Drug use as the sole explanation for criminal behavior is no more persuasive than these other characteristics. In truth, if we foolishly outlawed the conduct mentioned above, we would create the same criminal identities presently imposed on users of illegal drugs. Experts know that past behavior, including the use of certain chemicals, cannot be used to predict the future criminal behavior of a particular individual to the extent that it scientifically or morally justifies imprisonment.

America's drug war has always trifled with science. But the assumption that the presence of a particular chemical in a person's bloodstream is sufficient cause for incarceration replaces the fundamental American right of presumption of innocence with the police-state mentality of assumed guilt. Yet, like many repressive governments, advocates of coerced abstinence say that we should not worry. Our children, friends, and relatives in jail cells for minor drug violations are not prisoners. They are simply patients undergoing the new therapy of coerced abstinence, "tough love."

One advocate of present drug policies argued that certain drugs

are not bad because they are illegal, they are illegal because they are bad. History, however, indicates that a century ago the groups that successfully lobbied to criminalize some drugs were equally motivated by their mistaken impression of which and why certain groups used specific chemical substances.

If you're under the misimpression that such bias has changed, conduct your own experiment. Watch television and count the number of drug commercials. The messages are certainly not that we need a "drug-free America." Instead, omniscient ads convey the idea that drugs are "cool" depending mostly on who uses them.

Our nation's drug policy has squandered hundreds of billions of dollars, locked up millions of Americans, destroyed countless families and neighborhoods, and created immeasurable violence and corruption. It is untenable to continue such policies by contending that conditions would be even worse without the drug war.

Congressional Testimony in Opposition to Drug Legalization

Bruce D. Glasscock

Bruce D. Glasscock serves as the chief of the Plano, Texas, police department and second vice president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

The following selection is congressional testimony by Bruce D. Glasscock before the House Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources, Washington, DC, on July 13, 1999.

My name is Bruce Glasscock; I am the chief of the Plano, Texas, police department and also serve as second vice president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police. I am pleased to be here this morning to share my experience in combating drug abuse and my views on the question of drug legalization. The issue of drug legalization is of great concern to those of us in the law enforcement community. It is my belief the nature of our profession provides law enforcement officials with a unique insight into the ravages caused by the abuse of narcotics and other dangerous drugs. These experiences have clearly demonstrated to me that this nation should not be considering legalizing drugs, but rather we should increase our efforts to combat drug traffickers and assisting those individuals who have become addicted on drugs to break the cycle of addiction.

Over the last few years, my position as chief of the Plano Police Department has provided me with a firsthand look at the problems and dangers that accompany drug abuse. The recent heroin overdose death of former Dallas Cowboy Mark Tuinci received extensive national media coverage; unfortunately, it was not the first such occurrence in Plano. Our community was faced with a series of

events involving heroin overdoses that resulted in our taking an aggressive plan of action in dealing with drug abuse. In June 1995 the city of Plano experienced its first heroin-related death. Additionally, between 1995 and 1996, our detectives noted an increase in burglaries being committed by heroin addicts to support their addictions. During this same time period local hospitals reported they were seeing about 6 overdoses a week, some of which resulted in death. Between 1995 and YTD 1999, there were 18 heroin overdose deaths related to Plano in some fashion—1 in 1995; 3 in 1996; 9 in 1997; 3 in 1998; and 2 deaths so far in 1999. The victims of these deaths were not your stereotypical drug addicts. The average age was 20 years old (range 14—36); most were young adolescent white males; most considered your average "All American Kid." Because of the rise in incidences of heroin overdoses, in early 1997 the Plano Police Department adopted a multifaceted strategy to attack the heroin crisis. First, we undertook aggressive enforcement action to identify and prosecute those responsible for supplying the heroin. The police department joined with the DEA, FBI, Texas Department of Public Safety, and other local law enforcement agencies in a coordinated effort.

Because of this effort, 29 individuals were indicted on federal charges of conspiring to distribute heroin and cocaine, as well as charges of contributing to heroin overdose deaths. Another of our enforcement actions involved an undercover operation in our senior high schools, which resulted in the arrest of 37 individuals on 84 cases of narcotics violations. We believe our enforcement actions have greatly reduced the amount of heroin being sold in the Plano community and the number of heroin overdoses.

The second part of this strategy involved using education as a means to reduce the demand for heroin. The DEA's Demand Reduction Specialist, who provided us with guidance in demand reduction, spoke at community meetings, helped utilize the media effectively, and assisted us in this effort. During this time our department hosted

several community meetings, the largest occurring in November of 1997. This meeting was attended by more than 1,800 citizens and was televised and covered by the national and local media as well as the city cable television network. Our education efforts would not have been successful if it were not for the cooperation of the Plano Community Task Force, Plano's Promise, and many other community organizations not affiliated with the police department. These community organizations provided education programs to high school groups, PTAs, neighborhood associations, and church and parent groups. In addition to the above-mentioned strategies, our department is involved with several organizations that are working to continue the fight against drug abuse. These organizations strive to prevent drug usage through education, as well as intervention. The department is currently involved with the Kick Drugs Out of America Program, which is a school-based program designed to teach children the skills needed to resist drug and gang-related pressure. This program is in addition to the police department–run D.A.R.E. program, which also teaches elementary school children the risks of drugs and how to resist peer pressure.

We are currently working with a nonprofit organization in Florida that offers home drug-testing kits to families. This organization, Drug Free America, offers a free and anonymous way for parents to find out if their children are using drugs. If the child tests positive for drugs, Drug Free America provides the family with support organizations in or near the community to help with intervention efforts.

Our statistics show a clear reduction in the number of heroin overdose deaths, as well as hospitals reporting a reduction in overdose cases, which leads to the conclusion our strategy is working. Our continuing investigations also show a reduced availability of heroin on the streets in our community. Unfortunately, the battle is not over. Our drug risk assessment continues to show the North Texas area is a major hub for shipment and distribution of a variety of illegal drugs

by Mexican drug traffickers. These drugs include methamphetamine, heroin, cocaine, and marijuana.

The porous Texas/Mexico border has 1,241 miles of frontier that challenges all our local, state, and federal resources. Since the enactment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) the major ports of entry have experienced approximately a 30 percent increase in legitimate commercial and passenger traffic. The number of vehicles inspected has increased, but the overall inspection rate has decreased, affording new opportunities for smuggling. Our statistics show, since passage of NAFTA in 1992, Texas had the highest volume of drug trafficking in the nation. All of this directly impacts local communities located along the NAFTA transportation corridors and will continue to do so.

This massive effort represents what just one city faces and has gone through to combat the flow of drugs into its community in order to protect its citizens. Plano is not unique; similar scenarios are being repeated in communities throughout the nation. Combined strategies like the ones I have just described to you are expensive, complex to manage, and sometimes controversial. However, they are working. Unfortunately, if those who favor legalization have their way, our efforts to reduce crime and protect our children from the horrors of drug abuse will be wasted. It is a simple fact: increased drug abuse and increased crime go hand in hand. It makes no difference whether users can purchase their drugs legally or not, they must still find a way to pay for them. And the way most drug addicts finance their habits is through crime. Eventually they will do one of two things—"they will either steal or deal." This is not just speculation on my part; in 1996 a study conducted by the National Institute of Justice clearly demonstrated drug users are more likely to be involved in criminal activities.

The findings in this study indicated that a median 68 percent of arrestees test positive for at least one drug at arrest, and the same study conducted in 1995 revealed that 31 percent of both male and

female arrestees reported that they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time they committed crimes. That year's report also indicated that 28 percent of inmates arrested for homicides were under the influence of drugs when they committed that crime.

In 1986, during the midst of the crack epidemic, violent crime reached a level of 617 violent crimes per 100,000 citizens. As we experienced a continuing escalation of drug-related violence, this figure rose in 1993 to 746 violent crimes for every 100,000 citizens. In response, an outraged public joined together with government leaders to challenge the escalating violent crime. As a result of these efforts vigorous new enforcement programs were implemented in the 1990s that have begun to reverse this trend. In recent years, we have seen a decrease in the violent crime rate in many communities—such as New York City, Boston, and Houston—attributable to aggressive law enforcement efforts and the incarceration of criminals. We know vigorous law enforcement actions aimed at criminal activity, including illegal drug use, can have a material effect on reducing violent crime in our communities. After making progress against violent crime during the past several years, we should not erode these gains by instituting policies such as the legalization of drugs, which we know will increase drug use and drug-related crime.

In addition, aside from the fact that legalization will lead to an increase in the level of crime and violence in our communities, increased drug use has terrible consequences for our citizens in other ways. Drug-related illness, death, and crime are estimated to cost Americans almost $67 billion a year. That translates into every American having to pay $1,000 per year to carry the costs of health care, extra law enforcement, car crashes, crime, and lost productivity due to drug use.

Drug use also impacts on the productivity of America's workers. Seventy-one percent of all illicit drug users are 18 or older and employed. In a study conducted by the U.S. Postal Service, the data collected shows that among drug users, absenteeism is 66 percent

higher and health benefits utilization is 84 percent greater in dollar terms when compared against other workers. Disciplinary actions are 90 percent higher for employees who are drug users, as compared to non–drug users.

Public safety is another critical area that is impacted by drug abuse. A 1993 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration study reported that 18 percent of 2,000 fatally injured drivers from seven states had drugs other than alcohol in their systems when they died.

I trust it is clear by now why other law enforcement officials and I believe the legalization of drugs is the wrong course for our nation to take. Drug legalization will lead to increased crime; a decline in economic productivity; significantly increase the burden on an already strained health care system; endanger those traveling on our roadways; and, perhaps most tragically, sends a message to our children that drug use is acceptable.

The Partnership for a Drug Free America reported the results of a recent survey showing that as young Americans perceive that drugs are dangerous, drug use drops proportionately. Conversely, as young Americans get the message that social disapproval drops, as they hear the legalization debate, drug use increases. Drug use in America was reduced significantly between the years 1985 and 1992. Since 1992, and until recently, the amount of antidrug messages has decreased. As recently retired DEA Administrator Tom Constantine once said, ". . . as a nation we took our eye off the ball and began to get complacent about drugs—drug use among young people began to rise again in 1992." The legalization movement and the growing destigmatization of drugs, along with the confusing message we are giving our young people, will result in further decreases in the perceptions of risk, and I believe a concurrent increase in drug use among our youth.

Within this atmosphere it is very difficult—if not impossible—to reach children and convince them that doing drugs is bad. We must

not make it easier or more acceptable for today's young people to start down the slippery slope from drug experimentation to drug addiction. We, as a nation, must continue to clearly, and unequivocally, state that drug use is dangerous, drug use is unhealthy, and drug use is illegal.