

## Vicente Fox Sits Down With High Times Magazine To Blast Drug War

By: Roque Planas – July 16, 2013

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It doesn't get much more pro-marijuana than this.

Ex-President of Mexico Vicente Fox sat down for an interview with High Times magazine, where he blasted U.S.-led drug war efforts as a "total failure," praised the Portuguese policy of total drug decriminalization, and reaffirmed his call to legalize weed.

"The War on Drugs convoked by President Nixon 40 years ago as has been a total failure," Fox told High Times, which posted a video of the interview to YouTube on Tuesday.

"Of course I watch the Portugal phenomenon, which has been great," Fox continued. "Total legalization and total good results."

Portugal decriminalized all drugs in 2001, routing drug users through the public health system instead. A 2009 study by the Cato Institute found that teen rates of illegal drug use dropped, along with HIV infections from sharing needles, after the policy was implemented, according to Time Magazine. More than twice as many people sought treatment for drug addiction after the new policy was implemented.

Fox pointed out that, despite the great resources poured into drug prohibition and the violence stemming from trafficking, illegal drugs actually pose less of a public health problem than legal drugs like alcohol and tobacco -- or even food.

"Today many more people die from excess in drinking alcohol, or excess in smoking, or excess in having bad eating habits," Fox said. "And so diabetes, so obesity is killing much more people than drugs. Same thing with alcohol and that."

Fox has embraced drug legalization as his main issue recently. Last month he traveled to Seattle to speak as a guest for Don Pellicer, a company that hopes to commercialize marijuana in Washington and Colorado -- two states that recently legalized marijuana's recreational use, though the federal government still views smoking pot for fun as illegal.

Shortly after the Seattle trip, Fox told Mexican newspaper Milenio he'd grow weed if it were legal.

But Fox says he's not primarily motivated by a desire to enter into the marijuana business. He's more concerned about the violence unleashed by ex-President Felipe Calderón's frontal assault on the country's drug cartels.

Some 70,000 people have died since Calderón launched the anti-cartel assault in 2006. To judge from the drugs seized by the Border Patrol on their way from Mexico to the United States, the world's largest drug market, the vast majority of those killings stem from control over the trade in marijuana.

“My highest priority is to stop violence in Mexico,” Fox told High Times. “And this is one clear way that we will accomplish that in the process of time.”