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President Obama's New Drug War Strategy and the Low-Down on 'America's Trillion Dollar Dope Game'

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Personal blogger Clarence Walker lays out where the money went, what it accomplished, and where we could go from here.

Houston-area journalist Clarence Walker reflects on the occasion of a trillion dollars spent on the failed US drug war.

No other has spent more money on the dope trade than our own U.S. Federal Government. Even the richest of drug barons and associated players, dead and alive, cannot or could not have competed with the avalanche of paperwork doled out by the government in its fight against this monster. Even the once ruthless - and now dead - Pablo Escobar and his Medellin Cartel, the Cali Cartel or the Mexican Drug Cartels cannot match the money they have earned from the drug trade with the amount the Federal Government has allocated for years in its battle to stem the flow of illegal drugs into America.

And what is the cost for our government in its fight against this narcotics epidemic, a war raged now for some four decades? By all means have a guess, but here is the figure according to The White House: One trillion dollars.

The war on drugs is the longest war the American government has ever fought, longer than World War II, the Cold War, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. And even after 40 years, the battle to enforce the laws of the land that prohibits "getting high on dope", this poisonous, addictive trade continues to thrive with the ferocity of an earthquake across the planet. Quite obviously, there is no clear-cut victory in sight.

From the outset, if the intent driving the war on drugs, beginning in 1970 under President Nixon's Administration, was to create a drug-free America, we can see that after the spending of a trillion dollars, culminating in millions of arrests, the creation of a burgeoning health care system with which to effectively treat addicts, and the billions spent on law enforcement's task of arresting drug dealers and the prison system in housing the millions of nonviolent drug offenders alongside

thousands who have brought violence and death, the "war on drugs" nevertheless remains a dismal failure.

This stated, 'drug warriors' on the front lines against the illegal drug trade, beginning with The White House and extending to Congress, the FBI, the DEA and down to the street cops of America, remain committed to fight this evil to the finish line.

A DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) spokesman issued the following statement: "Our fight against drug abuse and drug trafficking is an ongoing struggle that should be treated like any other social problem. Now is not the time to abandon our efforts."

Therefore, if America's war on drugs is a sure loser then what plans will be deemed effective enough to change courses for the better? Critics of drug policies say that the only sensible solution in controlling drug abuse in America is to legalize drugs across the board.

However, the Obama Administration concedes they have a better plan to deal with drug abuse and drug trafficking, a plan they state is far more efficient than that seen with previous administrations.



President Obama has Devised a New Drug War Strategy for America.

Three months ago, U.S. President Barack Obama unveiled a historical new drug war strategy for 2010 to fight drug trafficking, and to increase efforts towards prevention and demand reduction.

Those agreeable with the proposed plan view Obama's strategy as a step in the right direction.

"For the first time ever, the nation has an administration that views the drug issue first and foremost

through the lens of the public health mandate," says John Carnervale, an economist and drug policy expert who served under three previous White House administrations and four drug czars.

U.S. Drug Czar Gil Kerlikowke concedes the old drug war strategy hasn't worked. "In the grand scheme, it has not been successful," he told the Associated Press in May. "Forty years later, the concern about drugs and drug problems has, if anything, magnified and intensified."

In announcing the Drug Control Strategy before Congress, President Obama gave the following speech to unveil his new plans for America:

"I am committed to restoring balance in our efforts to combat the drug problems that plague our communities. Drug use endangers the health and safety of every American, depleting financial and human resources, and it deadens the spirit of many of our communities. While I am proud of the new direction described herein, a well-crafted strategy is only as successful as its implementation. To succeed, we will need to rely on the hard work, dedication, and perseverance of every concerned American."



U.S. Drug Czar Gil Kerlikowski says the old drug war strategy hasn't worked.

Obama has requested a record of \$15.5 billion for the 2011 drug war, with approximately two thirds of the \$15.5 billion for law enforcement and another \$5.6 billion for treatment and prevention.

The New Drug Control Strategy outlines the five-year goals to reduce drug use and its consequences:

- (1) Reduce the rate of youth drug use by 15 percent
- (2) Decrease drug use among young adults by 10 percent
- (3) Reduce the number of chronic drug users by 15 percent
- (4) Reduce the incidence of drug-induced deaths by 15 percent
- (5) Reduce the prevalence of drugged driving by 10 percent

In the aftermath of Obama's drug budget plan, the opposition took center stage, shooting barbs at what they brand as a similar blueprint to those mandated by previous administrations.

"Obama's newly released drug war budget is essentially the same as George Bush Jr., with roughly twice as much money going to the criminal justice system as to treatment and prevention, despite Obama's statements on the campaign trail that drug use should be treated as a health issue, not a criminal justice issue", said Bill Piper, Director of National Affairs for the non-profit Drug Policy Alliance.

"People say the drug budget hasn't shifted as much as it should have, and granted I don't disagree with that," Drug Czar Kerlikowske responded. "We would like to do more in that direction."

"Nothing happens overnight," he added. "We've never worked the drug problem holistically. We'll arrest the drug dealer, but we leave the addiction."

Former Drug Czar John P. Walters was unimpressed by Kerlikowske's disparaging comments. "To say that all the things done in the war on drugs hasn't made any difference is ridiculous," Walters said. "It destroys everything we've done. It's saying all the people in law enforcement, treatment and prevention have been wasting their time. It's saying all these people's work is misguided."

Critics say Obama's new plan to deal with drug abuse is needed but that the 'war on drugs' is still in effect because billions are still being wasted on overcrowding jails and prisons with low-level users and that the criminalization of illicit drugs has also fueled the HIV epidemic around the globe.

No billions, however, are wasted, according to DEA authorities as long as lives are saved from the destruction of drugs and while the arrests of thousands of drug kingpins and other large-scale dealers continues.

Anti-drug organizations have historically argued that the government's attempt to sway people from using drugs is a ridiculous course of action because people will always use drugs.

A drug war is not an overnight solution. Remember that it took the FBI almost 50 years to finally break the Mafia organizations into a million pieces. Today's Mafia is a far cry from the highly disciplined, secretive and well-oiled criminal machine it had once been; now a broken, disrupted syndicate polluted with more 'rats' on the feds' side than those members still alive, trying to 'kick'

hard enough one last time and score enough paper to retire without going to prison for the rest of their lives.

At this year's Vienna Declaration, Evan Wood, a founder of the International Centre for Science in Drug Policy, told the foreign media, "The current approach to drug policy is ineffective because it neglects proven, evidence-based intervention, while pouring a massive amount of public funds and human resources into expensive and futile enforcement efforts."

Overall, the ongoing violence seen in Mexico between rival drug cartels is a tragic reminder of the alarming threat of drug trafficking and the urgent need for every nation and foreign nations to keep pushing forward to protect its people from the violence, corruption and instability caused by illegal dope smuggling across national and international borders.

Mexican President Felipe Calderon offers a more rehabilitative approach. "If America wants to fix the drug problem, it needs to do something about Americans' unquenching thirst for illegal drugs."

Drug Legalization: Pros and Cons

Rising crime rates, the excessive cost of enforcing drug laws, and the exclusive availability of illegal drugs shipped daily into the United States have led to people from all walks of life in pressuring the government to legalize drugs.

Proposals to advocate drug legalization vary widely, with hard-line advocates opting for the elimination of all federal drug laws, while others call for more modest reforms. Some advocates focus on legalizing just marijuana, either specifically for medical purposes or more general use, and further schools campaigning for more 'flexible' and 'relaxed' narcotic laws.

Writer Ted Mclaughlin voiced his sentiments about what he calls 'America's failed drug policies'. "It is said that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat history and that is obviously true with prohibition when it was tried in the 1920s with alcohol."

"Our second attempt at prohibition, the "war on drugs" has done exactly the same thing. It has not stopped or decreased drug use."

"Instead of spending another trillion dollars trying to stop drug use and failing, while the drug cartels get richer and more violent, wouldn't it make more sense to legalize drugs and then tax the hell out of them?"

Supporters of legalization contend that easing the nation's drug laws would carry numerous benefits, such as the destruction of the black market and the inherent criminality which surrounds it. If drugs were legal and available in the legitimate marketplace, they believe, that smugglers and their networks of dealers would be put out of business and drug gangs would no longer engage in violent battles for territories.

As the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) once put it: "Drug legalization would sever the connection between drugs and crime that today blights so many lives and communities."

Does this sound logical or is it a figmentation of someone's fantasy? Here are the real voices declaring whether or not drugs should be legalized and they belong to those in the trenches of

America's drug war, the former DEA agents and narcotics detectives, the patrol officers, political players from the past as well as those still active in the dope game, professional drug crusaders:

Case Argument Number # 1:

David Boaz, a high-ranking member of the Cato Institute, states, "As long as Americans want to use drugs, and are willing to defy the law and pay high prices to do so, major drug busts are futile, and, yes, drugs should be legalized."

Case Argument Number # 2:

U.S. Congressman Bob Barr said, "Despite numerous law enforcement efforts and the dedicated service of thousands of professional men and women, the government has not halted drug use; the problem is worse today than in the 1970s when President Richard Nixon first coined the phrase the "War on Drugs."

"Whether we like it or not, tens of millions of people have used drugs and some will continue to use drugs. Yet in 2005, we spent more than \$12 billion on federal drug enforcement efforts and another \$30 billion was spent to incarcerate non-violent drug offenders."

Case Argument Number# 3:

Jeffrey A Miron, a senior lecturer in economics at Harvard University, is on the same team as Congressman Barr. In a CNN commentary, he wrote that, "Drug prohibition has disastrous implications for National Security.

By eradicating coca plants in Colombia or poppy fields in Afghanistan, prohibition breeds resentment for against the United States and we enrich those who produce and supply drugs."

"Prohibition, Miron adds, supports terrorists who sell protection services to drug traffickers."

Case Argument Number # 4:

DEA Authorities: "Critics of drug legalization have made the argument that drugs are no more dangerous than alcohol. But drunk driving is one of the primary killers of American people. Do we want our bus drivers, nurses, doctors, school teachers and airline pilots to be legally allowed to ingest drugs one evening, and operate freely at work the next day? Do we want to add to the destruction by making drugged driving another primary killer?"

Case Argument Number# 5:

Charles B. Rangel, U.S. Democratic Congressman, stated, "Rather than holding up the white flag and allowing drugs to take over our country, we must continue to focus on the drug demand as well as supply if we are to remain a free and productive society."

Case Argument Number # 6:

Joe Harris, a retired narcotic detective with Harris County Sheriff department in Houston Texas offered his views on President Obama's new drug war approach in spending more money focused

on prevention and to treat serious drug abuse as a major health issue:

"For a drug user to get help they must first want it. It is a good thing for the Obama administration to try another approach in dealing with drug abuse because enforcement is not doing it."

Harris should know how the drug trade works and how it affects millions of users. As a highly regarded narcotics detective with 20 years of experience on the streets of Houston, Harris worked many high-profile drug trafficking cases both with the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency and the FBI under the HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area).

In one heroin bust in 1983, former detective Harris was shot and seriously wounded by a drug dealer in Houston's South Park area. A total of five people were shot in the firefight, which was captured by Channel 2 news reporters.

During the late 1980s, when the Federal Government cracked down nationwide against the epidemic of crack cocaine, Harris worked deep undercover with Houston's DEA office to bring down major drug criminals in the Houston area. This operation netted multiple charges against several people in what was to become the first crack cocaine case in the United States to be tried under the Federal Kingpin statue. In a jury trial lasting three months, out of 20-25 defendants, many were convicted and sentenced to prison, including the ringleaders Martha Marie Preston and Johnnie Binder. Both Binder and Preston were given 40 years in prison.

Although Harris supports preventative alternatives, the retired detective is adamantly against legalizing drugs. "Drugs are bad for your health including marijuana because marijuana even causes birth defects in new born children. How in the hell can intelligent people be so stupid as to think that dangerous drugs should be legalized?" Harris concluded with these parting words. "If drugs were legalized, that would only increase addiction."

Case Argument Number# 7:

Actor Bruce Willis encapsulates his drug legalization thoughts in terms of government benefits. "Cocaine is killing this country and the countries 'coke' goes into. If the government was not making money on it they would have stopped it in one day."

Case Argument Number #8:

Jacksonville Florida Police Chief Tony Grootens who worked 21 years with the DEA, agrees with many of President Obama's new drug enforcement programs. Most importantly, Grooten forewarns of the pitfalls in battling a drug problem within communities.

"If you have a bunch of people in a community involved in narcotics, thats the kind of community you're going to have."

Grooten also agrees that strategies aimed at staunching drug abuse should continue: "I think we need more prevention here at home and more controls on our borders to stop the flow of drugs. If you have a farmer in Bogota, Colombia gowing coffee and making a living or if he can grow cocaine and get rich, what is he going to do?"

Case Argument Number # 9:



Former DEA Agent Lew Rice says that if drugs were legalized it would only increase addiction that those wanting to legalize drugs should allow their children or grandchildren to try drugs.

Lewis "Lew" Rice is a retired Special Agent with DEA (DRUG Enforcement Administration). Throughout Rice's exemplary career, he worked the nitty-gritty streets of Harlem, taking down drug dealers in New York, Jamaica, Miami, Washington D.C., Philadelphia and Detroit.

As a security business owner, Lewis recently wrote an interesting book about the drug trade titled:

'DEA Special Agent: My Life On The Front Line'(Dorrance Publishing Company). In the book, Rice recalls his firsthand experience of the devastation caused by drugs:

"Several of my friends had served in Vietnam and when they returned to the States, their daily focus was to purchase heroin. My running buddies were distracted, and I wanted revenge."

When Rice first joined the DEA he hopped on a train home to where he lived with his mother in the housing projects of Queens, New York. Upon arrival, he told her: "Mom, I'm a Special Agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration."

She responded unenthusiastically, "You don't need to be involved in that work, it's too dangerous."

But this young man wanted to be a anti-drug enforcer. He felt passionately that dealers belonged in the penitentiary and for 25 years he helped put many there.

As for drug legalization, Rice feels that the idea is totally misguided and illogical. "Those that seriously believe in legalization should try it with their own kids and grandkids to see how it works."

"The people I know have seen first-hand the danger of drug addiction, overdose, breaking up families and the devastation of entire communities."

Lewis provides his assessment of the 2010 National Drug Control Strategy under President Obama:

"It is a well thought out, sensible and reasonable plan. As a former 25 year veteran of the DEA and also a parent who has raised children who fortunately did not succumb to the drug life style, I applaud Obama's strategy."

Rice says that part of Obama's prevention education plans designed to educate teenagers about the dangers of drugs, including providing treatment on demand, is an important step in the right direction.

But Rice also says it is very important for the government to continue "aggressive law enforcement against drug dealers who know the danger of using drugs because they don't use drugs themselves."

"Drug dealers know that drugs ruin people lives."

A graduate of St. John's University, Rice was sworn in as a Special Agent with the DEA on October 29th, 1974. Lewis became the first African-American to become the Special-Agent-in-Charge (SAC) of the DEA office in New York, one of the largest drug enforcement agencies in the world. He also served as the SAC for the Detroit and Philadelphia offices.

Overall, Rice is not surprised that many people favor legalizing drugs. In his book, he writes, "In June 2000, I wrote an op-ed piece for the New York Post in response to a column by Arriana Huffington, an advocate for legalizing drugs. "

Rice's decisive article explained how important it was that drug enforcement and prevention programs should work hand-in-hand to assist the government's ability to impede drug trafficking

and save the lives of young people.

What stunned the veteran agent was that ninety-five percent of the respondents to his story ridiculed him, stating that the 'drug war' was a failure.

In Rice's book, he fired back, "tell that to the spouses and children of the hundreds of narcotic agents and officers who were either killed or severely injured trying to stop drug dealers from poisoning the minds of our children."

Case Argument Number# 10:

Retired Houston-based DEA agent Charlie Mathis had a message for all those who say drugs should be made legal: "How would they feel if one of their family members were on hooked on a drug like PCP, a drug that makes people go crazy - they take off their clothes and become violent as hell."

Case Argument Number #11:

Dionne McCloud, a Houston resident with extensive knowledge of drug users and the drug trade, says that even if our government legalized drugs it wouldn't prevent the dealers from making money but that legalization would serve to make the situation more complicated.

"If drugs were legalized, the government would have to change drug laws, then regulate the drugs sold to people."

And there's the risk factor. She added, "Legalizing drugs would increase addiction and even allow the government to be sued if someone's relative or love one died from an overdose."

"Does anyone really think the government wants to be responsible for legalizing dangerous drugs like PCP, heroin and cocaine that can cause immediate death?"

Case Argument Number#12:

As a Journalist, writer and documentary film maker, Tom Feiling lives in South London. Feiling has argued for drug legalization for several years through his writing and film productions. His documentary "Resistencia" is a powerful film based on the Hip-Hop culture in Columbia and won numerous awards at Film Festivals worldwide. This sensational film was aired in four countries.

Last year, Penguin Books published Feiling's first book, 'The Candy Machine: How Cocaine Took Over The World.' In 2010, the book was republished as 'Cocaine Nation'.

Feiling has worked for the BBC and produced another documentary called 33% Heroin and subsequently he wrote a compelling feature in The Sunday Times newspaper, 'The Truth About Cocaine in Britain'.

Feiling stated to this journalist. "I've heard it said that if drugs were legalized, those currently involved would find other criminal activities to make money from. This strikes me as a fatalistic way of looking at the problem. Drug dealers respond to the demand for drugs, which can only be

supplied illegally."

In response to critical statements made by former DEA agents, Lew Rice and Charlie Mathis, say "for people in favor of legalizing drugs how would they feel to see any of their family members on PCP or other hard drugs."

Feiling responds, "Truth be told, I know almost nothing about the drug PCP. But if it were legal and regulated, public health authorities would have the ability and motivation to educate people like me about PCP. Therefore I'd be able to find out a lot more about it and its effects."

If drugs in America were legal, Feiler indicated that the drug producers of Colombia would be undercut by legal production of cocaine and driven into bankruptcy. Feiler explains. "Legal opium production for medical use is a mainstay of the economy in Tasmani, Australia. It is legal, regulated and taxed; organized crime groups in Australia have no interest or place in the business."

"The terrible violence afflicting countries like Mexico, Colombia and Afghanistan would be significantly reduced by legalizing drugs like cocaine and heroin."

The concept of drug legalization does have some credibility but so far only has a place in a few countries:

- (1) Argentina
- (2) Canada
- (3) Sweden
- (4) Czech Republic
- (5) Netherlands
- (6) Portugal
- (7) Norway

In 2001, Portugal earned the distinction of becoming the first European country to abolish all criminal penalties associated with personal drug possession. Drug users in that country are targeted for therapy rather than prison sentences. DEA officials express opposition against the American government incorporating European liberal drug policies into U.S. law.

Why are the DEA opposed to the idea?

DEA authorities told Congress that when Holland legalized marijuana, heroin addictions also tripled. But overall drug use in fact decreased to comfortable levels in Portugal.

Case Argument Number 13:

Houston's KPFT Radio Host Dean Becker is one of the nation's fiercest advocates against drug prohibition laws. A former marijuana grower, he staunchly supports legalizing drugs. "People need

to know the truth about these draconian drug laws."

In a Huffington Post article published last year, Becker asked this simple question: "Who are the real drug kingpins?"

He ticks off a cast of characters. "They are bankers, pharmaceutical house CEOs, weapons manufacturers and a thousand other corporate interests whose gross profits depend on violence, hatred, distrust and deception. The prohibition of drugs is the ideal mechanism to continuously increase the rhetoric of fear and to incrementally diminish our rights and freedom."

A former U.S. Air Force Security Policeman, Becker retired from the oil and gas business in 2001 and following retirement commenced a new career as a radio host for the Pacifica Networks KPFT 90.1 Station.

In 2002, Becker founded the Drug Truth Network on KPFT and currently each week produces nine programs for more than 60 broadcast affiliates in the United States, Canada and Australia.

KPFT Drug Truth Network has gained so much popularity that recently the world-renowned James A. Baker Institute for Public Policy at Houston's prestigious Rice University has archived Becker's radio broadcast for download and stream the option to hear the program on its website.

For years, Dean advocated on his popular show that the American government's so-called 'war on drugs' has been an absolute failure. "Over thirty million people have been arrested, we empower our terrorist enemies, we enrich barbarous cartels, and we're giving a reason for the violent gangs to exist, and furthermore we ensure more access to drugs for our children."

In a July 11th interview with New Criminologist journalist Clarence Walker, Becker insists the drug war is the legacy of the DEA and other associated law enforcement. "No DEA agents, or narcotic enforcers, (former or current) will come on my show to defend the drug war policy."

Why? He explained what he considers to be their cowardice: "Law enforcement have their reputation to defend. They wouldn't want to say, 'We've locked up over thirty million people for nothing!'"

When this journalist asked Becker what he thought of the former drug agents quoted in this story, who said legalizing drugs would only increase addiction, the radio host paused, then replied, "there's a slight chance people will try drugs. But Obama's treatment and prevention program ends right there because it amounts to window dressing the situation and not really doing the kind of job and what it takes to tackle the bigger issues regarding drug use and the profits made by our enemies who turn around and use the drug profits to arm themselves with military weapons to kill American people."

Becker does agree to an extent with Obama's new approach toward helping those dependant on drugs. "Treatment should be made more available on demand rather than people being caught by the law and forced into treatment."

"This war on drugs will go on until the last man standing and the last man standing will say: 'Lock up the drug dealers, they are the bad guys.' So the war on drugs will remain the first declared war that could last forever."

Here is a more in-depth report of the Obama Drug Control Plan:

Prevention:

- (1) Steady collaboration between public health and public safety organizations to prevent drug use.
- (2) To curtail drugged driving by encouraging States to establish and enforce laws that impose penalties for the presence of any illicit drugs while driving.
- (3) Start a National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign.

Health Care Intervention:

- (1) Increasing screening and early intervention for substance use in all health care settings.
- (2) Curbing prescription drug abuse by expanding prescription drug monitoring programs.
- (3) Supporting the development of new medications to treat addiction.

Breaking Incarceration Cycle:

- (1) Promoting and supporting alternatives to incarceration such as drug courts.
- (2) Supporting post-incarceration re-entry efforts by assisting in job and housing programs.
- (3) Developing more effective models of addressing substance use disorders among youth in the juvenile justice system.

Disrupting Drug Trafficking:

- (1) Implementing the Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy, the Administration's border plan, which require U.S. agencies to take specific actions to address the serious border drug threat.
- (2) Interdicting the southbound flow of currency and weapons.

Ethan Nadelmann, Executive Director for Drug Policy Alliance, weighed in on Obama's drug plan for America. He writes in a Huffington Post article, "The Obama Administration has taken important steps to undo some of the damage of past administrations' drug policies. And there's no question that it points in a different direction and embraces specific policy options counter to those of the past thirty years. But the new plan makes it clear it is still addicted to the reality of the drug war."

Under U.S. Freedom of Information Act Law, the Federal government released the following historical audit this year on the Trillion dollars spent on the drug war since 1970, and the cost is still rising as nationwide law enforcement, the DEA, FBI, U.S. Border Patrol, U.S. Military and other drug enforcement groups continue to battle the Mexico Drug Cartels and Afghanistan's heroin

trade along with drug trafficking throughout cities in the United States.

(1) \$20 billion for designated foreign countries to battle drug gangs in their home countries. In Colombia, for example, the U.S. spent more than \$6 billion, while coca cultivation increased and trafficking expanded to Mexico, thus bringing forth years of horrendous violence.

(2) \$33 billion in marketing "Just Say No" message to America's youth and thousands of other prevention programs. Yet high school students report the same rate of illegal drug use during the 1980s and 1990s was practically the same usage in the 1970s. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention also says drug drug overdose have "risen steadily" since the early 1970s to more than 20,000 drug deaths last year.

(3) \$49 billion allocated to law enforcement agencies to stem the flow of illegal drugs transported across the border. Experts predict at least 25 million Americans will snort, swallow, inject and smoke illicit drugs in 2010, which averages more than 10 million more users than in 1970. Much of the consumable drugs this year alone will come from the narcotics territory of Mexico.



(4) \$121 billion to arrest more than 37 million nonviolent drug offenders, 10 million of them for marijuana possession. Studies show that jail time usually increases drug abuse.

(5) \$450 billion to incarcerate drug offenders in the federal prison system. Last year, half of all federal prisoners in the U.S. were serving sentences for drug offenses.

At the same time, drug abuse is costing the nation in other ways. The U.S. Justice Department estimates the consequences of drug abuse has overburdened resources, including a burgeoning health care system, lost productivity and destruction of the environment will eventually cost the U.S. over \$200 billion a year.

With the government now having spent a trillion dollars to fight drug trafficking and drug abuse, what is the game plan to end this war altogether?

There isn't one. And there should be no plan to quit because questions must be asked, such as if the government legalize drugs because people still use drugs, then why not legalize murder, rape and robbery? This sounds extreme of course but it's the same principle; the law hasn't resoundingly stopped people from killing their fellow human beings, so is there a reason then to legalize murder?

Case Argument Number#14:

The Final Argument: Drug Crusader Carolyn Gargaro makes a compelling case against drug legalization: "I believe we need to focus more on educating children on the dangers of using drugs and keeping the drug dealers from bringing the drugs into our country. Just because some efforts were misplaced that does not mean we should throw in the towel and make illegal drugs legal. Should we re-focus our efforts, 'yes'. Eliminate our efforts, 'no'."

Adversaries who favor drug legalization have said that taking drugs is an individual choice and people have a right to ingest drugs as they see fit as long as there is no harm being caused to anyone else.

Gargaro responds, "I understand this argument but it has two major flaws: First, we don't have the right to do anything with our bodies. Can I walk down the street naked?" Can I say what I want to say anywhere at anytime? (if you said "yes", try yelling "hijack" on a airplane)."

"If drugs become legal, be prepared to see me walking around topless. I'll be damned if people are allowed to shoot up with drugs and I have to wear a top on a blazing hot day in the summer!"

Regarding illegal drugs' harmful effects, the crusader replies, "Don't tell me that drugs only hurt the user, tell that to a crack baby. It is estimated that over 100,000 babies each year are born addicted to cocaine and I don't think these babies chose to take these drugs."

"How can we prohibit legal drugs like "Phen-Fen" due to its side effects but allow people to take cocaine?"

Most critics say if drugs were legalized it will mean less government and less taxes: Gargaro counters, "legalizing drugs will not magically change the government and if government has not

changed prior to drug legalization, then legalized drugs will only lead to more government."

This dedicated person outlines the consequences of drug legalization and what it will bring forth for American people:

(1) New Laws For Minors:

"If cigarettes and alcohol cannot be sold to minors, can anyone realistically say that drugs will not be restricted from minors."

(2) Lawsuits:

"Everyone should be aware of the lawsuits against the tobacco industry; so guess how many lawsuits will be brought up for drugs?"

(3) Taxes:

"Do people really think legal drugs will not be taxed? In fact it is the tax from the drugs to pay for all the drug rehab programs."

(4) Will Legalized Drugs Reduce Crime?

"Crime will also not be reduced by drug legalization because studies show a correlation between drug use and crime - violent crimes such as homicides, assaults, robberies and domestic violence".

"Has anyone considered the reason that people committed a crime was because they were on drugs, legal or not? And violent behavior caused by drugs won't stop because drugs are legal. Legal PCP isn't going to make a person less violent than illegal PCP."

"Crime will rise when drugs are legal," Garago added, because more people will be taking drugs. And think about this. "Drug-related crime rates are highest where crack is the cheapest."

(5) Have Previous Prohibition Laws Worked?

Gargaro says, "No."

"Did alcohol use decrease when it was legalized? No. When abortion became legal, did abortions decrease? No. When an action becomes legal, the number of people carrying out that action increases. Drugs are no different."

Furthermore, she argues, "Unless the most harmful and addictive drugs, such as crack and heroin, are made legal, people will still be drawn to these black market drugs."

"How will children and teenagers learn to say 'no' to pushers when they see their parents getting high with government consent. The drug war is long and difficult and sometimes seems hopeless but we shouldn't give up."

When an Associated Press reporter asked U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano why the government still spends billions of dollars on drug programs that haven't really worked, she

lamented: "Look, this is something worth fighting for because drug addiction is about fighting for somebody's life, a young child's life, a teenager's life, making sure they have abilities to be successful and productive adults. If you think about it in those terms, that our government are fighting for lives and in Mexico, they are literally fighting for lives as well from the violence, then you realize the stakes are too high to let go."

End

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Sources and Quotes used for this story: (1) Associated Press (2) CNN News (3) DEA Records (4) Carolyn Gargaro (5) Huffington Post. (6) U.S. Government.gov. (7) British Filmmaker and Journalist Tom Feiling (8) KPFT drug crusader Dean Becker.

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