



United Nations threatens Colorado, Washington state over marijuana decriminalization laws

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(NaturalNews) Likely empowered by a U.S. administration that favors the kind of nanny state politics a ruling global entity would no doubt embrace, the head of the United Nations' International Narcotics Control Board feels comfortable telling federal officials they should move to challenge measures in Colorado and Washington that decriminalize possession of small amounts of marijuana for adults 21 and over.

Raymond Yans lectured the voter-approved measures - part of the United States' democratic process, something most UN member countries are not familiar with - send "a wrong message to the rest of the nation and it sends a wrong message abroad."

In an interview with The Associated Press, Yans said he would like to see Attorney General Eric Holder "take all necessary measures" to ensure that marijuana possession remains illegal throughout the United States.

Does the UN remember that Obama inhaled?

Currently, both states are awaiting the implementation of plans to regulate and tax the drug because officials there are waiting to see if Washington will assert its federal authority in the matter. At present, pot is a Schedule I controlled substance, in the same category as LSD and heroin. The federal Drug Enforcement Administration has said that marijuana has a high potential for abuse and "no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States," the New York Times has reported.

Yans' outrage makes us wonder here at Natural News if he read reports back in 2006 when then-U.S. Sen. Barack Obama told the American Society of Magazine Editors that he did, in fact, smoke marijuana.

"When I was a kid, I inhaled," he said. "That was the point."

Also, is Yans oblivious to the fact that the Netherlands has essentially legalized pot by decriminalizing both its possession and sale? Or that Portugal, in 2001, became the first European country, according to Time magazine, "to officially abolish all criminal penalties for personal possession of drugs, including marijuana, cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine?"

At the time, critics of the policy change warned that drug use would skyrocket in a nation where hard drug use was already the highest on the continent. But a subsequent study by the libertarian-leaning CATO Institute in 2009 found no appreciable increase in usage. In fact, in the years after personal possession of drugs was decriminalized, illegal use among teens in Portugal dropped while rates of new HIV infections caused by the sharing of dirty needles also fell. The number of people seeking treatment for drug addiction; however, more than doubled - but that figure was an acceptable alternative to incarceration because the Portuguese government had previously determined that treating offenders would be cheaper than jailing them.

"Judging by every metric, decriminalization in Portugal has been a resounding success," Glenn Greenwald, an attorney, author and fluent Portuguese speaker, who conducted the research, told Time. "It has enabled the Portuguese government to manage and control the drug problem far better than virtually every other Western country does."

"I think we can learn that we should stop being reflexively opposed when someone else does [decriminalize] and should take seriously the possibility that anti-user enforcement isn't having much influence on our drug consumption," Mark Kleiman, author of the forthcoming *When Brute Force Fails: How to Have Less Crime and Less Punishment*, and director of the drug policy analysis program at UCLA, told the magazine.

'If our people really want it, we need to do it right'

A number of U.S. politicians have begun to see it that way.

A year ago, the governors of Washington and Rhode Island - Democrat Christine Gregoire and Republican-turned-Independent Lincoln Chaffee, respectively - petitioned the federal government to reclassify marijuana as a drug with acceptable medical uses, "saying the change is needed so states like theirs, which have decriminalized marijuana for medical purposes, can regulate the safe distribution of the drug without risking federal prosecution," the Times said.

"The divergence in state and federal law creates a situation where there is no regulated and safe system to supply legitimate patients who may need medical cannabis," the governors wrote in a letter to Michele M. Leonhart, the DEA administrator.

"What we have out here on the ground is chaos," Gregoire told the Times. "And in the midst of all the chaos we have patients who really either feel like they're criminals or may be engaged in some criminal activity, and really are legitimate patients who want medicinal marijuana."

"If our people really want medicinal marijuana, then we need to do it right, we need to do it with safety, we need to do it with health in mind, and that's best done in a process that we know works in this country - and that's through a pharmacist," she added.

Learn more:

http://www.naturalnews.com/038140_United_Nations_Colorado_marijuana_prohibition.html#ixzz2Dd6rCuot