
Conference Report

Drug lobby plans counterattack on behalf of pot, cocaine cartels

In early September the Bush administration announced a major offensive against the domestic plague of drug addiction, with great fanfare and much media attention. In the succeeding weeks, the government of Colombia launched a heroic effort to break the back of the drug cartels in a military offensive which gives real meaning to the term "war on drugs." While the U.S. government has assisted this effort in many ways, overt and covert, the Colombian campaign has virtually no echo in U.S. domestic policy. On the contrary, the media has devoted itself to discussing the terms of surrender in a war which has not yet begun.

The theme is drug legalization, and its exponents include the editor in chief of the *Economist* magazine in London, prominent professors from Harvard and Yale, economics guru Milton Friedman, and former Secretary of State George Shultz.

The unifying factor behind this campaign, and the people waging it, is an American organization called the Drug Policy Foundation, and its European counterpart, the International Anti-Prohibitionist League, which held a joint conference in Washington, D.C. over the weekend of Nov. 2-4.

Shultz speech rocks Washington

In the week leading up to the conference, George Shultz delivered an address to an alumni gathering at the Stanford School of Business, where he is now a professor, in which he stated that after reviewing his involvement in the anti-drug efforts of the Nixon and Reagan administrations, he is convinced that legalization of drugs is now the only viable approach. "If I am catching your attention," he told his audience, "then read a bold and informative article in this September's issue of *Science* by Ethan Nadelmann on this subject." The speech, reprinted in the *Wall Street Journal* on Oct. 27, was an advertisement for the conference, which Nadelmann was organizing, and Shultz followed up with a telegram of greetings which contained an offer to "refer people to you who are interested in supporting reform of current policy."

The reaction from leading administration spokesmen was bitter and swift—behind the scenes. Drug Policy Coordinator William Bennett said Shultz's statement "stinks," and added that "it might explain the reluctance of the State Department to support" Bush administration anti-drug initiatives. Drug Enforcement Administration chief John Lawn, speaking at

Quantico, Virginia, stated flatly, "George Shultz just does not understand the drug problem. He made exactly one speech on the subject during his entire tenure at State, and that was during a time when we were trying to convince other governments that this was a priority issue." The White House contributed a snide remark directed at Shultz as well, but this was the only counter comment which received any press coverage at all.

Propaganda offensive under way

Nadelmann told the Drug Policy Foundation conference that the Shultz statement was a signal to a myriad of former government officials who will now venture to attack the Bennett program in public. From his position as associate professor at the Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, Nadelmann has reached out to a broad array of establishment figures, and using the calling card provided by his fellow Princetonian Shultz, has found a receptive response to his message of surrender.

"I can't give you names, yet," telephone calls every day from people who support this position, but are not ready to do so in public. I have spoken to a federal judge in New York who is willing to solicit signatures from his colleagues in support of a public statement urging legalization. We will run this in newspapers across the country."

As further evidence of the prospects for an establishment revolt against the Bennett policy, Nadelmann pointed to the participation in the conference by such figures as Rufus King, former counsel to the Kefauver Commission, and retired D.C. Superior Court Judge Orm Ketchum. King, who has been battling drug control efforts since the days of Harry Anslinger, said that he "had never been more confident" of the prospects for legalization.

Ira Glasser, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union, explained that the dynamic among the closet supporters of the cause is on-a-one by one basis, for now. "When they see something like Shultz's statement, it encourages them to put a toe in the water . . . and they'll talk to someone [with credentials] like Nadelmann."

"You have to look at this like the environmental movement, or the Green parties in Europe," Nadelmann said. "Ten years ago, who would have thought that these obscure issues would be dominating things the way they are today? This

movement will grow in the same fashion.” His answer to the critics who say that the legalization movement has no step-by-step proposal for the elimination of drug laws (and the participants of this conference freely admit that they don’t), is similar: “Look at the movement for abortion. No one ever argued over how abortions would be provided—clinics, hospitals, or whatever—the focus was on getting rid of the laws first, and the rest worked itself out.”

The perception of momentum is everything in such a campaign, according to Nadelmann, and the major media will be joining in building support for legalization in the months ahead. Nadelmann says that magazines like *Atlantic Monthly*, and other establishment journals, are preparing feature articles on the legalization question for publication in the next months.

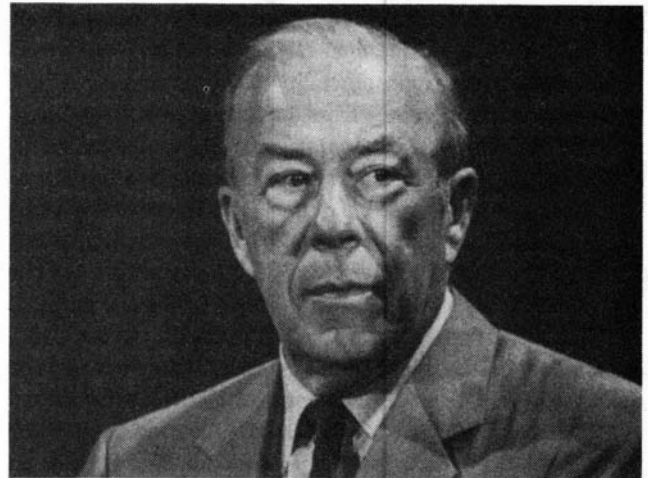
The Vietnam syndrome. . .

Arnold Trebach, foundation president and justice professor at American University in Washington, D.C., repeatedly referred to the Vietnam war as a reference for the current drug policy, both with respect to the demoralization within the establishment, and the eventual waning of public support for an effort which is being fought half-heartedly.

Retired New York City Chief of Detectives, Ralph Salerno, and Wesley C. Pomeroy, former police chief of Berkeley, California, who was security chief at the 1969 Woodstock rock festival, both emphasized the same point in conference presentations. “The foot soldier in this war, the patrol officer and the drug field agent, are in the same position as the soldier in Vietnam.” Salerno said. “Don’t judge their morale by the pronouncements of their political leaders.” Both men stressed that once the barrier has been breached in public, the law enforcement community, now drowning in the drug tide, will look to legalization as a viable life preserver.

Pomeroy pointed to the attendance at the conference by the police chief of Columbia, Missouri, as evidence of the nascent support for his policy among active duty officers. Considering that there is an entire generation of “police managers” trained by the likes of Pomeroy and his fellow drug lobbyist, Patrick V. Murphy, these assessments are not idle boasting. The protégés of Murphy have distinguished themselves with public attacks on the National Rifle Association and the right to own firearms, and have been in the forefront of those who have organized and condoned the brutalization of anti-abortion protesters in cities around the country. The drug legalization hobby-horse will be easily ridden by these liberal tyrants.

The more insidious threat to the morale of police is represented by the bevy of “criminologists” participating in the conference. This closely knit network extends from the academics like Trebach and Nadelmann out to people like conference panelist Dr. Gary Potter, of the Department of Police Studies, Eastern Kentucky University, in Richmond. Potter



Former Secretary of State George Shultz, who now advocates the legalization of cocaine, marijuana, and heroin.

described the situation in depressed agricultural areas, where marijuana has become the only cash crop, and stated that local police will not arrest, and judges will not bring to trial, the growers and smugglers in these areas. These academic networks, in conjunction with the defense attorneys who comprise the membership of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, or NORML, are the real backbone of the drug legalization campaign.

And the Rand Corp.

As if in answer to the invocation of the spirit of the Vietnam War by the conference organizers, the Rand Corp. materialized, in the person of analyst Peter Reutter, to participate in several panel presentations. Reutter is typical of the systems analysts who have shaped government policy in recent years. Like his predecessors in the McNamara Pentagon, he professes to support victory, yet produces studies which prove defeat inevitable. He is the author of the study “Sealing the Borders” which convinced the Pentagon, and later, Bennett’s office, to abandon drug interdiction as “not cost effective.”

The method of the study is dubious in the extreme, since it begins with the premise that the effect of interdiction can be modeled using the price of cocaine as an indicator. He then states that there is no reliable data on the actual price of cocaine, and nevertheless creates a “theoretical” analysis which predicts diminishing returns in terms of price increase, for each incremental increase in military interdiction efforts.

Privately, the conference organizers were ecstatic over the participation of Reutter, and feel that the administration’s reliance on the approach he represents is the guarantee of their ultimate victory. Reutter, of course, “opposes” drug legalization, he just wants the debate on the issue to be “scientific.”

International participation

The conference promised representatives from several Ibero-American nations—Brazil and Colombia, in particu-

lar—but none showed up, for understandable reasons. Peter Heiken of the Inter-American Dialogue did make an unannounced workshop appearance, by way of giving the seal of approval to the conference from the foreign policy establishment he speaks for. Heiken downplayed the danger represented by international drug money, arguing that this represents only a small proportion of the flight capital in the world black markets, and concluded that legalization will not have a major effect on the debt situation of the drug producers, nor will it shift the internal political balance of those countries.

“The drug barons do not intend to be the Al Capones, dying of syphilis in a federal jail,” he said, “they intend to be the Kennedys, who elect their sons to office.” He referenced a statement attributed to Enrique Santos Calderone, in *El Tiempo* of Peru, who said “give us a Marshall Plan or give us legalization,” as typical of the sentiment in Ibero-America. Heiken’s (and the banking community’s) flat response: “Forget a Marshall Plan.”

The European participants in the conference were the founders of the International Anti-Prohibitionist League, the counterpart to the Drug Policy Foundation.

The main delegations were comprised of:

- a group of parliamentarians and others affiliated with the Italian Radical Party, led by Marco Pannella, Marco Taradosh, and Luigi Del Gatto.

- a French judge, George Apap, who is Attorney General of Valence.

- Dr. Cindy Fazey and other leaders of a showcase heroin-maintenance clinic in Liverpool, England, which operates under the direction of the Warrington Health Authority. H.B. Spear, retired Chief Inspector of the Drugs Branch of the British Home Office, accompanied the delegation.

- a delegation from the Netherlands, comprised of Peter Cohen, sociologist director of the Research Program on Drug Addiction in Amsterdam; Henk Jan Van Vliet, lawyer and director of the Metropolink Study and Research Center, also involved with Amsterdam’s drug programs; and Ed Leuw and M. Grapendaal, both of The Netherlands Ministry of Justice in ’s Gravenhage.

This delegation’s function was to facilitate a sleight of hand. They first insist that the British and Dutch “experiments” have not failed, despite widespread agreement that that have in international anti-drug circles. They then carefully avoid mentioning that in neither country has actually legalized drugs: Britain conducts a medically supervised heroin distribution system in select locations, and the Dutch have decriminalized marijuana and allow it to be sold in regulated outlets. In neither case has there been a drop in drug abuse, just the creation of a more controlled addict population. Cohen admits that it will be at least 20 years before legalization occurs, but the hope is that gullible Americans will go wholehog for legalization on the basis of the “success” in Europe.

Cohen is privately of the opinion that the new U.S. ambassador to the Hague has been sold this bill of goods, and

has become a supporter of the Dutch model.

The League otherwise looks to 1992 as the point when legalization will be a de facto reality, since the open borders policy under the Europe 1992 act will make anti-smuggling efforts useless within Europe. The league is planning a variety of conferences over the next year to develop that theme.

The U.S. campaign: break Jesse Jackson

The campaign to flank, and eventually destroy, the anti-drug sentiment in the U.S. government is seen by the Drug Policy Foundation as an approximately four-year process, with the next two years as the most crucial. The media blitz, and open defections by establishment figures described by Nadelmann are seen as the precondition for taking on the big problem, the popular hatred of drugs. If politicians like New York State Senator Joe Galiber and Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke can get reelected in spite of their endorsement of legalization, reasons Trebach, the way will be clear for snowballing political support.

Nadelmann, Trebach, and others in the leadership of the foundation recognize that 70% of the American public considers drugs to be the number-one problem facing the country, more important than the next four issues of concern to them. Nonetheless, according to Trebach, “those numbers are soft . . . if you get those same people into a ‘focus group’ [a gimmick used to test advertising campaigns—ed.] and present these arguments for a weekend, they will consider legalization,” on the condition that they are convinced that the addict population will not infest their neighborhoods. According to Trebach, the Nancy Reagan-era “moms’ organizations” which were led into the impotent “Just Say No” campaign, are moribund and ineffective, and are not the fundamental political problem facing the movement.

The fact that both Schmoke and Galiber are black politicians is fundamental to the legalization strategy. “The number-one problem we have is that Jesse Jackson keeps running for office,” stated Ira Glasser. He went on to explain that as long as Jackson voices the rock-solid hatred of drugs among the overwhelming majority of black Americans, the Democratic Party can not touch the drug legalization issue with a ten-foot pole, and it will go nowhere in state or federal legislatures.

The desperate hope of Glasser and other activists in the radical wing of the Democratic Party is that Schmoke can eclipse Jackson with the help of the media, and thereby demoralize the most solidly anti-drug voting bloc in the country.

With an administration which has no public response of substance to the treachery of the likes of Shultz, and has allowed the Rand Corp. to fashion a “limited war” approach to the drug insurgency, the prospects of the Drug Policy Foundation look viable, even if their policies are a disaster waiting to happen.