

*Assistant Professor of Politics and Public Affairs, Princeton University:*

To legalize or not to legalize? That . . . is not really the right question. The appropriate question is much broader, and it is one that incorporates the "legalize or not" question with respect to particular psychoactive drug products. What, simply stated, are the best means to regulate the production, distribution, and consumption of the great variety of psychoactive substances available today and in the foreseeable future?

. . . There are better and worse types of drug prohibition, with the Dutch "harm reduction" approach epitomizing the former and the American "war on drugs" the latter. Indeed, for many of those characterized as advocates of drug legalization, the Dutch model offers an alternative that is preferable not only to current U.S. policies but also to the extreme liberation model.

*Judge Stanley Goldstein, presiding judge, Miami Drug Court, to May 7 Drug Summit:*

I do believe that legalization is a cop-out. It is based primarily on frustration, because judges are getting to the point where they don't believe in what they are doing.

I do know, from personal observation, of the people who come before me and from the study done at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, that cocaine causes blood vessels that [bring] oxygen to the brain to constrict; brain cells denied of oxygen die; cocaine causes brain damage. The longer you use it, the more you do damage to the brain. Legalizing cocaine means it would be sold or given to users who are becoming more and more brain-damaged.

How would these drugs be distributed? If the government markets the drugs and forces the users to rob and steal to get money to buy cocaine, we are simply casting the government in the role of the street dealers today who contribute to the crime problem and homelessness.

If the government distributes the cocaine free, then more and more people will become brain-damaged. They will not be able to function. They will become homeless and depend upon the government for food, housing, and hospitalization. . . .

Why should the government spend millions of dollars to create zombies who are totally dependent upon the government to spend more money when we have proved in Miami that the vast majority of these people can be saved and transformed into contributing citizens. What effect is that going to have on your brain?

The vast majority of people in this country are law-abiding. They don't experiment with cocaine, crack, heroin, and other drugs simply because it is illegal. If you make it legal, I believe you are going to triple or quadruple the number of junkies that are roaming the streets today.

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## Ibero-America

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# Drug legalization back on the agenda

by Valerie Rush

The past few months have seen a dramatic resurgence of the so-called drug legalization debate in several Ibero-American countries key to the drug-trafficking chain, among them Colombia and Mexico. In both of these countries, the debate is

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## EIR warned of drug legalization push in 1991

*The following are excerpts from a 150-page EIR Special Report published in 1991, entitled "Bush's Surrender to Dope, Inc." In it, the story is told of how the nation of Colombia has been subverted by the combined forces of the drug cartels and pro-legalization forces inside the United States.*

When George Bush toured Ibero-America at the end of 1990, he unabashedly boasted that his Andean anti-drug strategy had been one of his three major foreign policy "successes," along with Panama and Nicaragua. And when his drug czar William Bennett resigned that post one month earlier, he told an incredulous public that his work was done, and that the United States "was on the road to victory" in beating the drug plague.

Bush and Bennett lied; the reality is quite the opposite. Not only is consumption of mind-destroying drugs like marijuana and cocaine *not* declining, or even leveling off, it is skyrocketing. . . . The official U.S. government statistics that claim that drug use is declining are based on absurd polling methodology and deliberate falsifications. . . . Drug production in Third World nations is also on the rise. According to conservative calculations based mainly on official production statistics supplied by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), *EIR* has

no longer limited to an esoteric exchange of opinions among a handful of economists, professors, and radical journalists. It is now a "policy option" on the agenda of presidential candidates—and even Presidents.

On June 6, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada was elected head of state in Bolivia. A millionaire oligarch with a *gringo* accent, Sánchez's first policy statement before even taking office was to argue the futility of a war against drugs. In an interview with Spain's *Tiempo* magazine, Sánchez insisted, "Prohibition has never achieved anything. . . . It is terrible to say it, but taxes should be placed upon the drug trade."

It is no accident that Sánchez should be the first President on the continent to endorse drug legalization. He is a member of the Washington-based Inter-American Dialogue, the Establishment's premier think-tank on Ibero-American affairs which has advocated drug legalization for years. The Inter-American Dialogue has members "on loan" to several gov-

ernments in the Americas in addition to the Clinton administration, but this is the first time it has owned a President.

It is equally significant that in Peru, another major drug-producing country, drug legalization advocates have failed to get to first base, perhaps as a result of the Alberto Fujimori government's unyielding offensive against narco-terrorism.

### Colombia: anti-drug resistance fades

Efforts by mafia-allied financial interests to force a debate on drug legalization back in the late 1970s in Colombia were a dismal failure. The nation still had its dignity, and citizens were outraged at the proposal. After more than a decade of targeted narco-terrorism on the one hand, and an appeasement policy "made in the U.S.A." on the other, moral resources have been significantly eroded, giving corrupted elements of the political elites their opportunity to revive an issue no longer considered taboo. Ernesto Samper Pizano,

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calculated that the drug trade is growing so rapidly—over 15% a year—that it is effectively *doubling* every five years. . . .

Smelling defeatism in the air, the lobbyists for drug legalization have gone into a frenzy of activity, in the United States and abroad, to convince people that the war on drugs is unwinnable. What was once considered morally reprehensible to the majority of U.S. citizens—that our children should have access to mind-killing narcotics—is now being openly published by such prominent U.S. establishment figures as former secretaries of state George Shultz and Cyrus Vance.

The legalizers have already made significant inroads. In the name of adapting to the "new realities," free hypodermic needles are now being offered to heroin addicts in American cities. Free condoms are being distributed to school children, while Satan worship is the ever-popular theme of rock music. In this bestial "counterculture" of satanic music and sexual promiscuity, drugs are presented as just another part of the "new reality" with which Americans must learn to coexist.

The drug lobbyists in the developing sector are working hand-in-glove with their colleagues in the United States. In a major drug-producing country like Colombia, legalization advocates point to the uncontrolled drug abuse in the United States as the primary justification for legalizing the drug trade at home. "Why should we spend money we can ill afford and sacrifice our finest citizens to wage a war that is not ours?" they argued. It were better to "control" the violence through legalization. . . . And so, morality gives way to the pragmatic politics of the free market ethic, and the negotiations are launched, the deals struck. . . .

President Bush is fully complicit in the legalization strategy. He has stated that his government's official policy is to *reduce* drug consumption by 50% over the next decade—not eliminate it. The problem begins with Washington's economic policies. Virtually every U.S. administration since [after] that of John F. Kennedy has premised its economic and financial policies on strict adherence to the anti-growth dictates of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the international banking establishment. This system has placed a premium on investment in speculative activities, and not in real production. What has happened as a result, is that the international financial system has become progressively more addicted to the flow of drug monies, to the point where today, the banking system is as hooked as a junkie on heroin. Not surprisingly, the international financial establishment is opposed to any serious war on drugs. . . .

Getting absolute control of Dope, Inc.'s billions means legalization. In practice, this has meant working with certain groups of drug runners to control or eliminate others. In the case of Colombia's drug cartels, the U.S. government has maintained a working alliance with the so-called Cali Cartel against the Medellín Cartel. . . .

The western financial Establishment's current timetable is to achieve a global legalized narcotics "industry" before the end of the 1990s. A difficult proposition? Yes, but at this point not an unlikely one, if the American people continue to tolerate discussion of legalization as a viable "option," continue to elect increasing numbers of legalizers to public office in the United States, and continue to tolerate policies which for more than 20 years have *deliberately* fomented drug use and the drug trade at home and abroad.

the man whose name has been synonymous with proposed drug legalization in Colombia since 1978, is today the front-running presidential candidate of the ruling Liberal Party.

Last May's police discovery of an illegal cache of marijuana in the briefcase of Bank of Colombia co-director Carlos Ossa Escobar served as an important testing of the waters by the legalizers. Instead of a public outcry and demands for Ossa Escobar's resignation, voices from the Congress, the political parties, and the media were raised *in praise* of the drug-abusing banker. Sen. Gabriel Muyuy said, "I admire [Ossa's] courage." Sen. Pedro Bonner: "The Senate should thank Dr. Ossa for the privilege of hearing him tell the truth forcefully and courageously." Enrique Santos Calderón, a prominent editor of the newspaper *El Tiempo*, declared that Ossa's only "crime" is that he is a product of the 1960s; after all, argued Santos, since time immemorial mankind has sought "artificial paradises and self-stimulation."

As the Ossa Escobar scandal was breaking, a London-based think-tank calling itself the Andes-Amazon Foundation surfaced to announce a series of international forums on drug decriminalization, to be held in London, the United States, and Bogotá over the next 12 months. The foundation argues that only the international decriminalization of drugs can assure the moral preservation of the world's political and social institutions. The foundation's purpose, according to its own literature, is to secure "universal blessing" and "generalized approval" for such a move.

Discussion over how to deal with Ossa Escobar's case was rapidly turned into a nationwide debate on drug legalization, with the weekly magazine *Semana*—owned by the family of the mafia-linked former President López Michelsen—taking the lead. Its June 19 edition contained interviews with influentials from the whole spectrum, ranging from an archbishop, to the gamut of presidential candidates, to respected political commentators. The nearly unanimous sentiment, with a few tepid exceptions, was that drug legalization—now that repression had proven a "failure"—was the sole policy option remaining to the government. The "debate" came down to whether it should be imposed unilaterally or multinationally, and whether it should be focused on decriminalizing consumption or whether the drug trade in its entirety should be legalized and taxed.

The fact that only three of the eight or nine presidential pre-candidates have publicly voiced their opposition to drug legalization—and one of those is a cleaned-up Samper Pizano!—shows how tainted the Colombian presidential campaign already is. Will 1994 see the legalizers take over another Andean government?

### The Catholic Church equivocates

The inroads made by the legalizers in Ibero-America are perhaps best indicated by the Catholic Church's factionalized position. A February 1993 seminar on drugs held in Bogotá and sponsored by the Latin American Bishops Conference



*The huge bust of a cocaine laboratory dubbed Tranquilandia, in Colombia, occurred when the nation was still fighting narco-terrorism. Insets: Ernest Samper Pizano in 1979, when he toured the United States stumping for drug legalization (right), and a recent photo of him as the leading Liberal candidate for President, pretending to be more "moderate" on the drug issue.*



(CELAM), released a series of conclusions which open the door for an eventual endorsement of legalization. One of those conclusions queries "whether total prohibition is the solution, given the experience of failure of this policy, or if it might not be better and more efficient to design a wiser guideline for the whole process, ranging from production through consumption." CELAM also urges "a pastoral dialogue with the drug traffickers."

At least two Colombian archbishops, Msgr. Augusto Trujillo Arango of Tunja and Msgr. Pedro Rubiano of Cali (also the president of the Colombian Bishops Conference), have called for a national debate on legalization. A Colombian source within the Catholic Church informed *EIR* that the majority view still opposes legalization, but that the "consensus politics" dominating the CELAM seminar provided the would-be legalizers their platform.

Some churchmen in Mexico appear to have accepted the legalizers' terms of debate as well. Javier Lozano Barragán, Bishop of Zacatecas, is quoted in the June 1 issue of the magazine *Siempre* that "if we decriminalize the consumption of drugs, we would break the threat of power which makes the drug traffickers so terrible." Just weeks earlier, the outspoken anti-drug Cardinal Juan Jesús Posadas Ocampo was murdered by mafia assassins in what many Mexicans view as an explicit warning to the church.

### Legalization debate spreading

The high-level debate over drug legalization in Mexico has reached frightening proportions. In May, Foreign Minister Fernando Solana told the press that legalized drug consumption in the United States would help to discourage drug trafficking. President Salinas de Gortari said to *Time* magazine in early June that decriminalized drug consumption "is a very delicate matter" and not something he would advocate for Mexico. And yet, *La Jornada's* pro-legalization columnist Miguel Angel Granados Chapa wrote June 6 that although Salinas has "for the moment" rejected legalization, "we cannot close the debate on this issue."

On June 16, former Finance Minister and ex-Ambassador to Washington Hugo B. Margain declared that "only a continental liberalization of drug consumption can eliminate the bestial profits of the drug cartels." The leading Mexico City daily *Excelsior* devoted an editorial to urging legalization, with the proviso that the initiative must come from the United States. Support for legalization has also come from the Salinas-linked Cardenista Front of National Reconstruction (PFCRN) and National Action Party (PAN), as well as from the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD).

According to the bimonthly Argentine newspaper *El Consultor de la Salud*, there is a campaign afoot to present drug legalization as a viable option in Argentina, too. Yet according to Dr. Juan Alberto Yaria, the secretary of Prevention and Rehabilitation of Addictions for Buenos Aires province, who is interviewed by *El Consultor* April 23, legaliza-

tion would cause "a disaster," given that a legalized drug supply would increase the number of addicts in the country by 50%, raising to nearly 18 million the population that would be at risk from such a policy.

Yaria ridiculed the arguments of Milton Friedman and other legalizers who insist that the state's job is merely to educate the population on the potential danger of consuming narcotics, as it already does regarding tobacco or high-cholesterol foods. "They are proposing that the state administer the chaos," says Yaria, who goes on to note that "Friedman's eminently economic theory [of legalization] would merely expand the drug market to include laboratories and banks."

Yaria concludes: "I think [legalization] is a way to lubricate social conflicts. If we have many people who seek drugs as an escape from their problems, they will find only one escape through legalization, and that is death. Thus, legalization is an aberration given that people are being educated to drug themselves."

The same publication interviewed numerous politicians and think-tankers for their positions on drug legalization. While every individual involved in rehabilitation of drug addicts came out squarely against legalization of drugs as tantamount to legalizing death, there were others who came out in favor of legalization. Among these is Luis Moreno Ocampo, a former prosecutor and the founder and current president of "Poder Ciudadano," a non-government organization financed by the U.S. State Department's Agency for International Development and with an agenda strikingly similar to that of the Inter-American Dialogue.

Moreno says, "Argentina should follow the path of decriminalizing drugs for consumption, because we all know that sending a person to jail is just sending them to another center of consumption." Moreno Ocampo told *El Consultor de la Salud* that a bill proposing drug decriminalization will soon be introduced into the Argentine Congress.

## Bush's phony war on drugs paved the way

by Jeffrey Steinberg

When Vice President George Bush rode into the White House in the November 1988 election on the coattails of his boss, President Ronald Reagan, he made the "war on drugs" one of the main themes of his campaign. Bush's "tough on crime, tough on drugs" campaign rhetoric was brought home to the American voter through a stream of Madison Avenue attacks on his ultra-liberal opponent, Massachusetts Governor Mi-