

(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-

chael Dukakis. Some of the most shamefully memorable of the Bush election propaganda ploys centered around the case of Willie Horton, a Massachusetts convict who committed a brutal rape while out of jail on a weekend furlough.

Four years later, when President Bush ran for reelection, his vaunted "war on drugs" was nowhere to be seen. Throughout the 1992 Bush-Quayle reelection drive, not a word was spoken about the drug plague and the incumbent's track record in combatting narcotics. And for good reason.

George Bush never had any intention of conducting a serious war on drugs. The tens of billions of dollars in taxpayers' money funneled into the Bush anti-drug effort was not simply wasted. The Bush war on drugs, as *EIR* warned early on, was never intended to succeed. Whether President Bush personally sought to further the cause of drug legalization by running a no-win effort is not clear. What is clear is that the advocates of drug legalization within the U.S. establishment were ecstatic over his phony war on drugs. And in the wake of its abysmal failure, the climate was to be set for the eventual legalization of mind-destroying drugs.

Both Bush's hypocritical anti-drug rhetoric and the propaganda of the drug legalizers were directed at the same target: wearing down the resistance of the American people—who still want the drug epidemic to be eradicated by competent and constitutional means.

Bush: drug lobby's best asset

Midway through the Bush presidency, the pro-drug lobby gathered for an international strategy session in Washington, D.C. On Nov. 3, 1990, at the Drug Policy Foundation's annual convention plenary session, Ira Glasser, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and a longtime legalization advocate, gloated that Bush's failed anti-drug effort had put drug decriminalization back on the strategic agenda after having been severely discredited by efforts in the late 1970s, spearheaded by Lyndon LaRouche, to defeat a string of marijuana decriminalization laws.

Glasser urged his listeners to steer a careful course, passing off legalization as "drug reform" while harshly criticizing the draconian police state measures directed against America's urban poor that had been implemented by the Bush administration under the guise of fighting drugs.

Dr. Andrew Weill, a Drug Policy Foundation director, predicted that the Bush administration's brutality against inner-city minority residents could trigger civil warfare. (This prognosis was delivered 18 months before the Rodney King case triggered stage-managed riots in Los Angeles and in a dozen other cities.) Weill added that he welcomed such civil unrest "because changes in lifestyle only occur when people are scared. A social catastrophe is needed to force the present policies of the drug warriors to be abandoned." If "social catastrophe" was what the legalizers needed to kick their drive into high gear, it was social catastrophe that Bush delivered—compounded by a degree

of hypocrisy that added further fuel to the fire.

The Bush track record

In the early years of the Reagan presidency, George Bush was appointed to spearhead the administration's anti-drug effort. The vice president was placed in charge of the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System (NNBIS), a well-funded effort advertised to seal America's borders from drug smugglers. Instead of bringing to bear the most advanced surveillance technologies and devising cooperative programs with other nations of the hemisphere, which might have drastically reduced the flow of illegal narcotics across the nation's borders, Bush chose to concentrate nearly all the NNBIS resources on one entry point: the southern Florida coast.

The South Florida Task Force, as it came to be known, did succeed in cutting off a good deal of cocaine and marijuana traffic into the south Florida region. However, the concentration of forces in that one area drained resources from other equally vulnerable border penetration points. The net effect: serious increases in the overall flow of illegal narcotics into the United States. While south Florida showed a marginal decline in illegal drug infiltration, southern California, New York, New England, and the entire southwest border area were flooded with illegal imported drugs. Caribbean smuggling routes up from Colombia were abandoned in favor of the Pacific border region between the United States and Mexico. Countries along that route—like Venezuela, Panama, Guatemala, and Mexico—found themselves faced with an invasion of narco-traffickers.

Today, even many serious law enforcement officials are convinced that drug interdiction is an impossible dream. Their reasoning? The Bush effort, which poured billions of dollars into interdiction, was a resounding flop, as evidenced by the increasing flows of illegal drugs into the United States every year over the past decade.

Policing the ghetto, ignoring the bankers

If the Bush-led border interdiction program was a calculated flop, the domestic war on drugs was an even bigger fiasco. By the last year of his presidency, Bush was funneling over \$12 billion a year into the war on drugs. A good deal of this was diverted to local law enforcement agencies, which found themselves increasingly absorbed into joint task forces with federal agencies like the FBI and the Drug Enforcement Administration. These joint task forces set their sights on small-fry trafficking organizations, usually made up of black and Hispanic dealers—ignoring the pivotal role of commercial financial institutions in laundering the drug profits. Under new mandatory sentencing guidelines steered through the Congress by the White House, hundreds of thousands of inner-city young men and women were thrown into the prison system for drug-related crimes. By the time George Bush left office, one out of every four black males under the age of 25 had spent time in jail.

With each new drug bust and jailing, fresh blood was drawn into the drug dealing trade. The entire process was accelerated during the pre-Christmas period of 1985 with the introduction of crack cocaine. Crack, a highly addictive form of cocaine which can be manufactured with little technical skill, hit the ghetto streets of America like a shock, as the result of a top-down marketing strategy by the executives of Dope, Inc. Soon, violent street gangs, often linked to prison-based gangs, were running the street-level crack trade. The spread of urban drug-related violence only increased the focus of the Bush team upon the bottom of the drug trafficking pyramid. As the prisons filled up with narco-gang members, the vicious cycle grew into a nightmare of unprecedented proportions.

Like drug interdiction, drug enforcement was also branded a dismal failure and worse. Bush's war on drugs came to be known as "war on blacks," "war on urban America," etc. Today's drug lobbyists cynically hide their opium war agenda behind the call for less enforcement and more medical care, and many people, scarred by horror stories of drug gang warfare and police brutality, fueled by out-of-control drug flows, listen.

In the meantime, free trade zealot George Bush peddled the further deregulation of America's banking system through measures that ensured that no steps would be taken to curb the role of the big financial institutions in laundering narco-dollars into the looting of the American economy. When President Reagan's Commissioner of Customs, William von Rabb, attempted to make a big deal out of the role of the Tampa branch of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) in Colombian cartel money-laundering, and sought the records of nearly 40 other big American banks that were dealing with BCCI, he marked himself as a candidate for replacement as soon as Bush stepped into the White House in 1989.

As early as 1978, *EIR* and Lyndon LaRouche warned that no anti-drug effort could succeed without concentrating top down on the role of the international banks in laundering narco-dollars. President Bush's policy of diverting his administration's war on drugs effort away from the banks pre-ordained that the program would fail.

Compounded by flagrant corruption

Instead of taking the advice of LaRouche, who was known worldwide as the leading U.S. anti-drug fighter, President Bush let LaRouche be railroaded into prison within days of his January 1989 inauguration. For many around the world, the jailing of LaRouche was the clearest sign of all that the war on drugs was, at least for the time being, dead on arrival in Washington. Then Bush filled his anti-drug hierarchy with individuals of such checkered backgrounds, as to promote cynicism.

In August 1988, after Bush had effectively taken over the Oval Office from a tired Ronald Reagan, Richard Thornburgh replaced Edwin Meese as attorney general. The

highest law enforcement post was filled by a man who had surrounded himself with drug-tainted criminals. Henry Barr, one of Thornburgh's top aides from his days as Pennsylvania governor, was forced to resign from the attorney general's personal staff when he was identified as a cocaine user and dealer. Richard Guida, who had been chief criminal prosecutor of Pennsylvania under Thornburgh, pleaded guilty to cocaine trafficking, and pointed the finger at Barr. In late 1990, Gov. Bob Martinez of Florida, a Bush political crony who had enjoyed the backing of suspected drug traffickers in his failed bid for reelection as governor, became the Bush presidency's "drug czar."

Thornburgh doctrine and genocide in Panama

Thornburgh's name soon came to adorn the Bush administration's outlaw "doctrine" authorizing the use of American military force anywhere in the world, in violation of national sovereignty, under the pretext of the "war on drugs." This doctrine was applied in December 1989 with the U.S. invasion of Panama—ostensibly to arrest Panamanian Gen. Manuel Noriega on phony charges of drug trafficking. Noriega had aided the U.S. anti-drug effort on countless occasions and had been a key fighter in the war on drugs. Seven thousand Panamanians died in the invasion, which led to the installation of a U.S. puppet regime run by Panama's most notorious drug traffickers and money launderers. The same pretext of a supposed war on drugs was subsequently used to justify the deployment of U.S. forces elsewhere in Ibero-America as well, including Bolivia and Peru.

Then there was President Bush himself. In addition to heading up the NNBS under Reagan, Bush had been in charge of the administration's covert anti-terror and Central America programs. Although he denies it, the facts show that Bush was the man in charge of the entire Iran-Contra fiasco.

Key to the covert funding of the Nicaraguan Contra rebels was the funneling of cocaine and other dangerous drugs into the United States. Dozens of references in the personal notebooks of Col. Oliver North identified known narcotics traffickers as key players in the Contra supply program. Medellín Cartel pilot Barry Seal served as a trainer of Contra flight crews and ran a covert arms-for-drugs route as part of the Central America program. Syrian narcotics trafficker Mansur Al-Kassar was brought into the secret Iran hostage negotiating team as the "second channel" for obtaining the release of the American hostages in Beirut. Al-Kassar was still working for the White House in December 1988 when his name came up repeatedly as being among the suspected controllers of the terror team that blew up Pan American airlines flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 270 people.

Programs designed to fail; billions of taxpayer dollars wasted; corruption publicly flaunted. This was the legacy of the Bush war on drugs. Without it, and the demoralization and confusion it generated, the current drive to legalize drugs would have been impossible.