

## DJ39 THE WAR ON DRUGS IS ALMOST OVER

With the recent statement by Attorney General Holder that the federal government will not prosecute people for marijuana offenses, as long as they are acting within the laws of their states, it is simply a question of time until the entire War on Drugs is over. In fact, the proverbial "light at the end of the tunnel" is now in sight. And within two years its demise, virtually everyone in our country will join together and wonder how we could have pursued such a failed and hopeless policy for so long.

But this is not really as much a victory for those who want to use marijuana as it is a victory for Liberty itself. The government has as much right to control what I, as an adult, put into my body as it does what I put into my mind. Instead, the government should devote its criminal justice efforts in holding people accountable for their actions.

For example, if you or I, as adults, go home after work and drink ten martinis, that certainly isn't a healthy or smart thing to do. But as long as we don't put other people's safety at risk by driving a motor vehicle under the influence, it is not a crime – nor should it be. The same should be true regarding other mind-altering and sometimes addictive substances as well.

As a practical matter, Mr. Holder's announcement is also a victory for the concept of Federalism, upon which our great country was founded. In my presentations on this subject, I often ask my audience how many of them believe the federal government has all of the answers. All I get in response is snickers. So why not allow the states to determine how best to protect the safety and welfare of its citizens regarding marijuana?

While on the campaign trail, Governor Gary Johnson said often that this approach would result in some spectacular successes, which could be copied, as well as some significant failures, which could be avoided. And besides, we really couldn't be in any worse shape regarding marijuana than we are now. So why not allow our 50 "crucibles of democracy" to come up with and implement their own workable plans, just like we do with alcohol?

But how does this new development mean the end of Drug Prohibition is in sight? Because most estimates show that of all of the people in our country who use any form of illicit substances, 80 to 85 percent use only marijuana. So soon everyone will recognize that the relatively small number of people who use all other drugs combined will not justify the enormous bureaucracy that is required to support the present system.

Fortunately this is already beginning to happen. For example, many people are starting to see that it is easier for our children to obtain marijuana, or any other drug, if they want to, than it is alcohol. Ask them yourself! And there is no quality control whatsoever under today's "system." That was also a significant problem under Alcohol Prohibition, but it went away after its repeal. In fact, ask yourself, "Who do you trust more, your state's minister of health or the mafia?" Then act in accordance with your answer.

Another pivotal question that people are starting to ask is "Who would you rather have receive the billions of dollars for these products, Mexican drug cartels, juvenile street gangs and other thugs, or instead have that money used to pay for our police and teachers and fix our roads?"

To take that thought to an international level, if our federal government were to announce that the United Nation's Single Convention Treaty, which requires all signing countries to prohibit these drugs, should be repealed, virtually all other countries around the world would heave a sigh of relief. And they would vote and act accordingly.

For example, the government of the country of Uruguay is quite close to selling marijuana to its residents itself. In addition, former Mexican President Vicente Fox recently came out strongly in favor of the legalization of marijuana and even all other drugs as well. That, says Mr. Fox, is the only way effectively to take away the profits and power of these blood-thirsty drug cartels. "Arbitrarily imposed prohibitions have ended," he says, "and they have ended because they don't work." Similarly, Justin Trudeau, who could very well be the next prime minister of Canada, recently acknowledged having regularly smoked marijuana, saying basically that it was no big deal.

Of course, Holland decriminalized marijuana and all other drugs way back in the 1970s. So how did Holland get around this treaty? In a most pragmatic way: they simply ignored it. And, according to its Minister of Health, Holland only has half of the drug usage per capita that we do – both for adults and for teenagers!

Portugal experienced similar results by decriminalizing *all* drugs in 2001. And what were the results? Portugal found that this approach reduced problem drug usage by a full 50 percent! Similarly, Switzerland's program to allow medical doctors to prescribe heroin to those who are addicted to it resulted in a strong reduction of crime and even drug usage in the neighborhoods surrounding those doctors' clinics.

So what should happen now? A logical next step for our federal government would be to legalize hemp, which is defined as marijuana in which the active psychoactive ingredient THC is only 0.3 percent or less. You could almost get more of a jolt from smoking the shirt you are wearing than marijuana with that low a percentage of THC. But hemp is a major industrial product that could enrich both our nation's farmers and merchants.

For example, we can get more ethanol from hemp per acre than we can from corn, and the hemp will not clog carburetors like corn will. Similarly, we can get four times more paper pulp from an acre of hemp than we can from an acre of trees, and it takes only 9 months to grow the hemp, but 20 years to grow the trees. Treating industrial hemp like we do cotton would strongly revitalize our farms, as well as our economy.

So please look into this entire issue. In fact, I hereby challenge you to name any area of life that is important to you, whether it be education, health, the economy, teenage drug usage, the environment, or anything else, and I will show you to your satisfaction how it is made worse by our

policy of Drug Prohibition. My email address is given to you below. Contact me, and let me prove it to you!

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