

According to ads that were first aired during Super Bowl 2002, if you buy drugs, you're supporting and funding terrorism. Most Americans thought the commercials were ridiculous. Ironically though, the history of drug prohibition and terrorist prevention in this country has produced similarities of flaws between the two issues, including everything from racism and civil rights violations to ineffectiveness and wasted tax dollars.

**THE WAR ON DRUGS
VS.
THE WAR ON TERRORISM
IN AMERICA**

by

Le Sheng Liu

Contact: leshengliu@hotmail.com

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| Problem | War on Drugs | War on Terrorism |
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| THREAT TO PUBLIC SAFETY | <p>Drugs that become illegal turn into businesses controlled and run by the mafia, gangs, cartels, and drug dealers, instead of by legitimate companies who must undergo inspections and licensing by the government and FDA. Blackmarket battle over turf and profits fuel violence and murder in cities across the country.</p> | <p>Anti-terrorist tension motivates racism, leading to hate crimes from vandalizing of Muslim churches to killings of Middle Eastern Americans. Decades of hostile foreign policy leads to vengeful attacks by victimized nations, initially taking place at embassies and vacation spots across the world, but eventually, on U.S. soil as well.</p> |
| RACISM | <p>Laws and sentences strengthen for offenses of drugs often used by poor inner city minorities (i.e. crack). Law enforcement finds it easier to catch and arrest lower class offenders in black ghettos than in other communities. Non-violent black & Latino drug convicts comprise majority of prison population, despite majority of users and dealers in America being white.</p> | <p>Hundreds of Middle Easterns in America are deported or arrested and detained for questioning without even probable cause for link with terrorists. Immigration & Naturalization Services does the same to foreign immigrants trying to stay in the United States. Response to 9/11 resembles response to Pearl Harbor when Japanese Americans were similarly scapegoated and detained.</p> |
| CORPORATE INFLUENCE | <p>Marijuana prohibition is driven by corporations which seek to avoid competition with the hemp plant's industrial uses. The drug was originally outlawed in the 1930s with the financial and propaganda-oriented assistance of Hearst newspapers and the Dupont company. Both businesses were threatened by hemp's potential to replace them as the leading resource for the manufacturing of products such as paper and cloth. To this day, our federal government continues to enforce marijuana in its Schedule I illicit status, although the substance has been proven to treat major illnesses such as AIDS. Ironically, these and other anti-drug campaigns are funded in part by the alcohol and tobacco industries. Furthermore, other drugs that have medicinal or therapeutic potential are ignored by the pharmaceutical industry because they lack potential in profits. Ecstasy, for example, was proven as an effective tool in marriage and trauma counseling, bringing new potential to the psychotherapeutic community since the 1980s. Yet, because its effectiveness relies on infrequent use, thus allowing patients to spend less on it than regularly prescribed anti-depressants such as Prozac, no pharmaceutical companies have bothered offering funding for research or support for legalization. On the other hand, within any given year, more than 20,000 Americans die from each taking one of the hundreds of prescription and over-the-counter medications that bring in billions of dollars for the pharmaceutical industry. The estimated annual death rate for all illicit substances combined is less than half of that number.</p> | <p>U.S.-sponsored warfare and political infiltration in the Middle East hasn't produced any progress in the region's economy or democracy. Rather, they have paralleled the struggle for Middle Eastern oil, dating back to when Britain discovered Iranian resources for powering World War I machines. In the following years, France and the U.S. gained access to the region as well. By 1953, the American government knew well enough to eliminate people like Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh, who had made plans to extend domestic control over his country's own oil. After helping to overthrow the democratically-elected Mossadegh and splitting the Iranian oil industry with Britain, the U.S. then helped place Shah Reza Pahlevi back in power and supplied him with masses of men and arms which he used to enforce an oppressive police state. In 1991, the Bush Sr administration attacked Iraq in the name of democracy and protecting Kuwait. Just 12 years later, Bush Jr follows in his father's steps and declares another war on Iraq. America did not bring down Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein in 1991 and made no attempts to do so within the 12-year gap that followed. Simply, the new problem during Bush Jr's term was that the traditional connections for oil importation, Saudi Arabia & Venezuela, had become less available in the past several years for political reasons while Iraq was still a runner-up with 10% of the world's oil resources. This is why the reported attack strategies from Bush Jr's administration would shield Iraqi oil fields from war damages while city and civilian populations are left open to endure the usual bombings.</p> |

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| WASTED TAX DOLLARS | <p>From the early 1980s to the turn of the millennium, the annual federal drug war budget grew from about \$2 billion to about \$15 billion (more than enough to send astronauts to the moon and back multiple times). Only about 15% of the money is spent on education and treatment while the rest is spent on law enforcement, prison building, and incarceration.</p> | <p>In 2002, senators approve President Bush's further call for war, greenlighting a \$353 billion budget. Subsequent proposal for a war against Iraq is estimated to cost approximately \$200 billion. During this period, America faces economic recession as spending on public education, health care, welfare, housing, and jobs all decrease.</p> |
| CORRUPTION OF OUR HEROES | <p>INTENDED HEROES: law enforcement officers.</p> <p>MOTIVE: protecting everyone from the harms of drugs by catching and arresting anyone selling, using, & in possession of drugs.</p> <p>RESULT: racist policies make it easier for them to monitor and catch offenders in inner city minority communities. Unconstitutional laws also allow police to do search & seizure without standard requirements for probable cause or warrants. Property & belongings that are seized and unverified, especially drugs & cash, easily turn into the personal possessions of law enforcement officials & officers. Most common, however, is the direct bribery from wealthy drug dealers.</p> <p>RECOGNITION: "crooked cops" and "racist pigs" become typical nicknames for the police. Uniformed officers often associated with harassment and brutality instead of enforcement of safety, especially among distrustful youths, racial minorities, and the poor.</p> | <p>INTENDED HEROES: war veterans.</p> <p>MOTIVE: protecting the U.S. and other countries from oppression & terrorism by eliminating such governments through whatever means necessary.</p> <p>RESULT: sent to other nations to bomb and gun down enemies, although children and civilians are almost always killed in the process. War crimes and crimes against humanity, including rape and torture, are consciously committed by soldiers whose innocence and morality break down under the traumatic and chaotic atmosphere of combat. <i>Platoon</i> and <i>Casualties of War</i>, two acclaimed films of the 1980s, revealed how such atrocities took place in the Vietnam War.</p> <p>RECOGNITION: returning soldiers cited as murderers rather than heroes, most notably during the 1960s & 70s when anti-war sentiment was at its height. This type of criticism adds to the post traumatic stress syndrome common among veterans haunted by painful memories of experiences in combat.</p> |
| SEPARATES & BUILDS PARANOIA AMONG THE PEOPLE | <p>As the Drug War scapegoats specific types of Americans with each illicit substance, distrust and internal conflict has become common within racial communities and youth cultures across the country. Even the use of informants has become particularly useful in catching drug offenders. And such people often cooperate to receive desperate rewards rather than to testify for the truth. They are almost always prisoners trying to get early release or detained suspects seeking lower sentences. When this is not the case, the informants are usually anonymous callers whose accusations rarely get verified before raids and arrests take place on the accused. Either way, low level offenders (if not completely innocent suspects) typically end up with harder punishments than the criminals they work for. The Drug War has thus corrupted our people by giving them a risk-free tool to randomly snitch on fellow citizens.</p> | <p>In February 2003, Americans nationwide bought out entire stocks of duct tape, water, first aid, canned food, and other emergency supplies as the U.S. placed itself on the highest terrorist alert since the day of 9/11. Newsweek magazine even released various articles during this time about the effects of fear on our mental and physical health, a reference to the possibility that anxiety can kill quicker than the likelihood of any potential terrorist attack. Indeed, that very month at a Chicago nightclub which violated emergency safety codes, more than 1000 patrons panicked, rushed to escape, and got trapped at the locked exit after sensing something painful in the air. Some had feared it was terrorist gas. Other reports say it was mace sprayed by security breaking up a fight. Either way, 21 people were crushed to death and dozens of others were seriously injured. No terrorist chemicals were ever picked up.</p> |

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| HOSTILE FOREIGN POLICIES | <p>During the 1980s, America begins moving drug war south of the border, pushing military forces into Mexico and South America and sending domestic problems such as police corruption and drug money violence into other countries. Colombia is among the most highly affected nations. Poor farmers there whose only affordable means of work is growing cocaine and heroin are driven to join Colombian drug cartels as U.S. forces burn and poison their crops. Just months prior to 9/11, the Bush Administration also gave the Talibans over \$40 million in support after the growth of opium poppies was banned in Afghanistan.</p> | <p>Since the 19th century, the United States has been notorious for trying to infiltrate, overthrow, and conquer other governments – Philippines (early 20th century), Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954), Lebanon (1957), Zaire (1961), Cuba & Vietnam (1960s), Chile (1973), Iraq (1991), Somalia (1992), and now Iraq again. Each time, our actions lead to the deaths of tens of thousands of foreign civilians through warfare, bombings, and economic disruption. The U.S. government even had a direct involvement in 9/11 – years ago, Osama Bin Laden and the Talibans received pivotal military training from the CIA when America was helping Afghanistan drive out Russian forces.</p> |
| IMBALANCE OF POWERS | <p>Drug policy as it exists today in the U.S. violates several principles upon which our country was founded. For decades, the Drug Enforcement Administration has held the power to create laws surrounding drugs, select the drugs they decide to outlaw, and then enforce the laws themselves. Our system of checks & balance was designed to prevent dictatorships and keep any one person or group from having too much power. The DEA works directly outside of this system by producing, approving, and implementing their own policies. In fact, the DEA went to court hearings in the 1980s with psychotherapists and chemists who protested their intentions to outlaw ecstasy (MDMA) and still banned the drug even though their own administrative judge concluded the hearing in favor of the protestors. Today, medical marijuana centers across the country are being raided by the DEA. Medical marijuana growers and patients alike are being sent to federal prison, even though citizens, cities, counties, and entire states have agreed to legalize the practice within their own regions. This blatantly violates the freedom of voting as a medium for the rights and voices of the people, as well as undermines the share of power entitled to state and local governments.</p> | <p>Following 9/11, America's Bush administration decided a war on Afghanistan would prevent terrorism in both countries. Quickly, as this war passed and a subsequent one against Iraq was proposed, worldwide opposition to Bush's plans multiplied. The U.S. administration declared another war in the name of several causes – preventing the Iraqi use of mass weapons, including biological ones; protecting the world from the potential disaster of these weapons; and serving the American people. Yet, as inspections repeatedly failed to reveal any such weapons from Iraq, Bush's plans persisted. Almost every national government across the globe disagreed with his decisions. In dozens of countries, including the United States, citizens by the millions participated in synchronized anti-war protests numerous times. Even the United Nations withheld their support from Bush. But none of this impacted his intentions, showing clearly that he would not listen to the very people he claimed to be fighting for. More importantly, this shows that the War on Terrorism is designed to give the U.S. federal government unlimited power over its own people and the entire world.</p> |
| CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATION | <p>Asset Forfeiture Law passed in the 1980s allows police and the DEA to enter your property, search all your belongings, and seize whatever they believe was bought with drug money. No warrant or evidence is even required. They only need a tip from an informant who can be anonymous and whose accusations require no verification. You are then guilty until proven innocent, not the other way around as it should be in the U.S. criminal justice system.</p> | <p>The Patriot Act of 2001 gives the CIA, FBI, and other federal agencies more leeway to investigate your phone calls, mail, email, day-to-day activities, and even the kind of movies and books you like. Attorney General John Ashcroft also proposed T.I.P.S. (Terrorist Info Prevention System) where handy citizens such as cooperative neighbors, plumbers, and electricians are recruited as government spies amidst an atmosphere of paranoia.</p> |

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| HYPOCRISY | <p>Our federal government spends billions of dollars each year on enforcement, incarceration, and ad campaigns to fight whatever substances the DEA has decided to ban. But few of the resources are used to fight the abuse of legal drugs. Every year, millions of Americans, including children & teens, overdose or become addicted to various medications such as anti-depressants, Ritalin, Vicodin, diet pills, and sleeping pills. A majority of Americans also can't go several hours without having some sort of caffeine (usually coffee) in their system. Alcohol is responsible for a majority of sexual assaults and other physical violence. It leads to tens of thousands of drunk driving injuries and fatalities each year. Most damaging, however, is nicotine smoking, which is by far the number one cause of death in this country (400,000+ cancer/disease victims annually). While all this is happening, the war on drugs attempts to convince our youth that their communities & schools are "drug-free zones" and that we live in a "drug-free America".</p> | <p>When other nations bomb or declare war on us, it's referred to as "acts of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction." Yet, when we do the same to them, it's apparently "defending freedom and spreading democracy." Surveys done across the United States during 2003 revealed not only that most Americans were against the war on Iraq, but also that they were aware of the hypocrisy. For example, in one online poll conducted by Time Magazine, voters were asked which country was the biggest threat to international safety & security – North Korea, Iraq, or the United States. Nearly 80% of the online participants said the U.S. In fact, ironically enough, America was founded upon the first practice of biological warfare. Colonizers and invaders wiped out entire cultures of Native Americans by inadvertently (but later intentionally) infecting the natives with deadly diseases common in Europe but previously unknown in the Americas.</p> |
| BIASED MEDIA COVERAGE | <p>Each time period experiences biased & propagandized hysteria over the "new killer drug" – alcohol in the 1920s, marijuana in the 30s & 40s, LSD in the 60s, heroin & cocaine in the 70s, crack in the 80s, and ecstasy starting in the late 90s. Often, users from particular racial, economic, or cultural groups are scapegoated and associated with the drug, turning both the person and the substance into villainous threats to public safety and morality. Meanwhile, comparatively little is reported on the damages of legal substances and the side effects of discriminatory and expensive drug policies.</p> | <p>Headline reports recognize domestic victims of 9/11, U.S. soldiers killed or missing in combat, and American tourists and reporters killed while abroad. But Middle Eastern Americans targeted in post-9/11 hate crimes and foreign victims of U.S. waged wars receive almost no sympathy in comparison. Furthermore, the validity and relevance of the anti-war movement is marginalized, citing any discussion of historical, political, and economic motivations for the 9/11 attacks as unpatriotic. Only the views and intentions of the Bush administration receive any media attention.</p> |
| ULTIMATELY INEFFECTIVE | <p>The availability and use of illicit substances have not decreased significantly in the past 30 years, not even in teen communities. Our prison population has swelled to over 2 million and growing, leading to the early release of murderers, rapists, and child molesters so that more cell space is available for drug offenders. Drug-related murders also continue to increase, especially in major urban areas such as New York City and Los Angeles. In 2002, the mid-sized city of Oakland, CA had a rate of more than 100 homicides, most of which were over turf and drug money. Nationally, as of 1990, America had nearly 1 million killings, a rate unparalleled since our last major drug war – the lawless decade of 1920s Prohibition.</p> | <p>Following war, nations do not experience safety, peace, or stability, but rather the complete opposite, as illustrated by the poor & dangerous conditions of Middle Eastern countries subjected to ongoing conflict. Promoted as democratic and patriotic, America's repetitive warmongering has instead lead to years of attacks against U.S. embassies, tourist spots, and ultimately domestic targets. In fact, after President Bush responded to 9/11 by sending troops to attack Afghanistan, bombings on American tourists across the world increased sharply, leading to the additional loss of hundreds of American as well as foreign lives. The following year as the U.S. government insisted on a war against Iraq, Osama Bin Laden allegedly urged Iraqis to terrorize U.S. soil as an act of retaliation.</p> |