

Argumentative essay on the war on drugs

Countries, United States



According to the office of national drug control policy, the United States government has spent over one trillion dollars on the war on drugs. In the year 1980, the government spent 1 billion dollars on the war on drugs. Twelve years later, the figure had hit 19 billion dollars. Currently, the government spends over 15.6 billion dollars every six months on the war. The war, which began during the time of President Richard Nixon, has not yielded much. The amounts of drugs that penetrate the borders of the United States are ever increasing, with the number of addicts on the rise, as well. Research into the matter indicates that the efforts by the government to fight the drug menace are just but a way of channeling the taxpayers' money down the drain (Miller 117). Then comes the question, is America fighting a losing battle? The answer to this question is pretty obvious considering that president Barack Obama is thinking about giving in to the pressure to end the war on drugs. The decriminalization campaigns and efforts by various interest groups are making sense at last. This paper seeks to explain the ineffectiveness of the war on drugs and why the government should consider the possibility of having the fight abolished altogether. Although the war on drugs was formally flagged off by President Richard Nixon, it had already taken root by the mid 1960's. During this time, the religious leaders and charitable groups had taken it upon themselves to stop the drugs menace after the government appeared reluctant to stop the tons of cocaine and heroin penetrating through the U. S borders. History has it that marijuana has been popular among the youth in the U. S for close to a century. According to Miller (120), the drug was common among jazz musicians as early as 1920. 92 years down the line, the drug has not been

eliminated. Instead, it has encouraged the young and older addicts to venture into other drugs such as Methamphetamine, which arguably the most dangerous drug in the world. The drug, which is made out of chemicals and dangerous hazardous materials, is usually manufactured in rural America, in such states as Missouri. The Obama government has identified drugs as the number one public enemy. Even so, fighting drugs is proving to be a futile idea. On the contrary, experts and opinion leaders are of the idea that the government withdraws the wars and decriminalizes the consumption of narcotics.

One of the key points why the war on drugs is ineffective is simply because the government is attacking the drug menace from the supply side.

According to President Nixon, as long as the demand exists, the scrupulous drug lords will always find a way of making the distribution possible (Ewan 304). Handling the demand is an absolute impossibility since identifying potential drug addicts is an uphill task to the government, especially where the threat is not attacked from the grassroots. A research conducted in the year 2000 indicated that 25.3 million people had consumed had drugs the previous year. The same research indicates that only 50,300 people had been arrested for being in possession of drugs that year. This is an understandable suggestion that the battle against drugs is ineffective since the identification of the culprits is not as easy as it may seem. Worth noting is the fact that the drugs are used by members of the boardroom equally as they are used by criminal downtown gangs and people behind bars.

Another reason why the war has been ineffective all this time is because of the corrupt enforcement officials. The drug lords and mafias dealing in the

illegal trade are wealthy, and will not mind parting with millions of dollars in an effort to protect their illegal drug connections. On the other hand, the ordinary enforcement officer will not resist the temptation of the million dollar bribe. As such, the drugs from such places as Mexico get their way through the boundaries into the United States where the market is flourishing. The ineffectiveness of the war on drugs can as well be connected to the fact that the politicians have made the war a play ground and a place for political trickery. Clearly all the aspirants seeking election to public office have the war on drugs on their manifestos. The war on drugs has become such an attractive manifesto maker. For this reason, politicians use it as a stepping stone to gain power (June & Gary 236). Additionally, the campaign is inadequate because the political class has made it a racial affair. Clearly, the legislation used to strengthen the war uses such race-oriented words as black, Caucasian, Negro, white et cetera.

According to professionals in the area of narcotic abuse, the right channels to be applied include education, early intervention and appropriate treatment to the addicts and users of hard drugs (Miller 129). The efforts to establish education on drugs in Latin America and the Caribbean has proved fruitless after a series of researches have indicated prevalence use of hard drugs. Following the failure of all the potent solutions, the only option that the government of the United States is left with, is the abolishment of the war on drugs. Arguably, the abolishment of the war on drugs and decriminalization of the use of hard drugs is likely to come with more benefits than losses. According to research, the United States government is expected to save more resources that can be employed in other productive

sectors of the economy. The arguments for the abolishment of the war on drugs can broadly be divided into two. The first part of the argument is the economic perspective while the second part of it is the social perspective. According to the economist's view of the abolishment of the futile war, the resources being spent on the fruitless efforts of curtailing the drug menace can be invested into other sectors such as the technology sector (June & Gary 243). The government spends close to 39 billion dollars every year on the enforcement of the anti-narcotics war. Critics of the war have argued that the campaign is yielding nothing but the creation of more state penitentiaries every day. Such institutions, according to the economist, are not any significant to the economy. On the contrary, they are locking up potential human resources that can add to the expansion and development of the economy. As such, the government should stop this war, as a way of redirecting the resources into more productive uses. Arguably, the amount of resources used in conducting arrests can be used to off-set California's deficit budget.

Another economic reason why the war on drugs should be abolished is because once the use and selling of drugs have been decriminalized, the people selling the drugs will be required to possess a government issued seller's license (Ewan 305). The implication is that such merchants will have to pay for the authorization besides being compelled to compulsorily contribute to national income through the mandatory payment of taxes. In addition to taxes, the government of the day can raise sufficient proceeds from making it a legal requirement for the consumers of hard drugs to hold a certification that is issued and renewed annually by a government

department at a reasonable fee. Through such fees, the government will raise money that can be used to facilitate development projects. Economists argue and predict that a regulated drugs trade is likely to contribute significantly towards the enlargement of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The social argument for the abolishment of the war on drugs is quite extensive and touches on every part of everyday life. One of the social reasons why the war should be abolished is that, such abolishment is the most crucial step towards the reduction of the crime rates in the country (Freidman 146). Research has indicated that crime is not a result of the drug menace, but rather an integral part of the same. For instance, an investigation carried out in 2000 indicated that 63% of the robberies that took place in the down town areas of America's largest cities were committed by drug addicts that later admitted that the money they stole or intended to steal was meant for purchase of drugs. The criminals later explained that they resorted to petty crimes because the prices of the hard drugs were too high for the average addict.

Another aspect of the social argument is that of family. Activists argue that the average man behind the bars of a state penitentiary is a father. The fact that the man is behind bars implies that the kids are developing in an incomplete family. Such children are the greatest potential criminals and juvenile cases (Freidman 150). Additionally, psychologists argue that children that grow up in broken families develop emotional instabilities even later in life. Similarly, broken families are not the ideal environment for bringing up children since the parent bringing up the children on their own is

likely to encounter financial problems.

In conclusion, it is evident that, from the foregoing, the war on drugs is more of a cost than an advantage to the people of America. The war is both a social and an economic cost. The war is a monetary cost in the logic that the government spends so much money on enforcing the antinarcotics legislation. Enforcement entails the recruitment and training of personnel. The equipment, for example, the vehicles, required to take care of such enforcement is a significant cost, as well. From the social perspective, the war on drugs breaks families and increases the rates of crime. An increase in the rates of crime brings about increase insecurity levels. It is no mystery then, why the war on narcotics should be abolished

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