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Just Say No

The U.S. should continue its active role abroad in the war on drugs.

By **JONATHAN CHANEY**

Don't let anyone tell you that the war on drugs is a lost cause. America's commitment to eradicating drug abuse is alive and well, just as it should be.

The war's newest offensive is aimed at the South American nation of Colombia. A country ripped asunder by four decades of civil strife, it is the source of 90 percent of the cocaine consumed in the United States.

And the United States hopes to slash that statistic with "Plan Colombia," a \$1.3 billion aid package that President Clinton formally gave a thumbs up to when he visited the country last week.

The plan calls for \$1 billion in military spending, to train and equip the Colombian army and police forces to fight the drug traffickers and give 18 Black Hawk helicopters and 42 Huey 2 helicopters. In addition, the package includes \$238 million in social assistance for drug crop substitutions, reforms for Colombia's judicial system and improvements in human rights.

Though not a cure-all, the plan is a step in the right direction.

The primary objective is to help the Colombian government crack down on the narcotics traffickers who are pushing illegal drugs into the United States.

Cut off the supply at its head and it will take years for the drug cartels to establish their roots in another country. That's valuable time in which the United States can continue its anti-drug programs at home, without a large influx of cocaine interfering.

But there is another benefit to the plan. The drug cartels have been supplying the Marxist rebels who have plagued the country with anti-government violence with "protection money."

It is estimated that they pay the guerrillas \$500 million a year, allowing the rebels to buy better military equipment than the Colombian army can afford. By eliminating the drug cartels, the guerrillas lose their primary source of funding, and the country's fragile democracy can be salvaged.

Plan Colombia is a two-pronged package that embodies America's ideals. It works toward our national interests by cutting off the nation's major cocaine supply, and it continues our tradition of supporting and protecting democracy around the world.

Critics will tirelessly argue that the money could be better spent on social programs in the United States to curb drug abuse. But our anti-drug campaign has been successful at home. Just ask our drug czar, Gen. Barry McCaffrey.

Statistics compiled by his office show that the use of cocaine has decreased by 70 percent in the last 15 years, and drug consumption by 12- to 17-year-olds dropped 21 percent from 1997 to 1999 alone.

We're doing something right. The numbers reflect that quite clearly. But that does not mean that we should stop our efforts both at home and abroad to eradicate drug usage. Our current social programs are doing positive work in curbing drug abuse. But the United States' priorities must also include cracking down on the suppliers who funnel illegal drugs through our nation's borders. Plan Colombia does that.

So if anyone claims the war on drugs is over, just say no.

Money should be put into social programs at home — not overseas.

By **JENNY STEPP**

The recent decision of the U.S. government to spend \$1.3 billion on aid in Colombia is another egregious example of U.S. drug policy gone horribly wrong.

Ninety percent of cocaine in the United States comes from Colombia and a large majority of the heroin finds its home there as well. It is indeed a major source of illicit drugs in the United States. But sending billions of dollars to one of the world's most notorious governments that is solidly linked with paramilitary groups responsible for more than 70 percent of the nation's 3,000-plus extra-judicial executions each year does not appear to be a sensible drug policy. Especially not when Clinton signs a waiver so that Colombia will not have to abide by even the most basic human rights standards of operations.

But while it is especially disgusting that the United States would send money to a government so infamous for its paramilitary affiliations, attempting to stop the drug problem at its source is a policy that is flawed from the beginning — no matter what country is involved.

Case in point: A 1994 RAND study examined the effectiveness of various approaches to solving the drug problem in the United States. The conclusion was remarkable. Drug treatment was seven times more effective than domestic law enforcement, 10 times more effective than stopping cocaine at the border and 23 times more effective than trying to stop drugs at the source. The package to Colombia has just funneled \$1.3 billion into the very least effective method of reducing cocaine consumption in the U.S.

Look, if people really want cocaine, they will find ways of getting it. I am not proposing that we legalize cocaine use, but that the U.S. government realize the real problems of cocaine use are here in our own backyard.

The best, quick-fix method of help is providing good treatment to everyone who asks for it. While the United States pours billions of dollars into the "war on drugs" every year, less than 10 percent of that total expenditure goes toward treating the hard-core users who are the real problem. Every year, more than two-thirds of the people who request treatment for their drug addiction are denied help because the government is funneling billions into guns for murderous Colombian paramilitary groups while denying medical help for those desperate addicts who need it so badly at home.

But truth be told, many drug addicts will not seek out help, which is why a truly effective, long-term strategy must address the problems that lead people to seek out drugs in the first place. The large majority of addicts are poor and undereducated, and if the U.S. government wants a population without the problems of drug addiction, these "root cause" problems must be addressed.

But for now, let the record show that I have no doubt the \$1.3 billion package to Colombia will end up being one of the biggest mistakes of the Clinton administration. The next president will be dealing with Colombian violence and corruption far into the next decade.

And addicts at home will continue to go untreated and ignored.



Revisiting Left-Wing Persecution

I've been told by several readers that some students have trouble reading "Harsh Light" because it is too verbose (that means that I use big words that they sometimes don't understand.)

After rereading my first two columns, I've concluded that the complainers are right. My writing can in fact be a variable plethora — nay, even a cornucopia — of verbal plenitude. Forsooth, forsooth. And since I am of no good whatsoever if I cannot make myself understood, I thought I'd take a relaxed approach to today's column by hitting my main theme from last week one more time, and then trying to shed a little much-needed light on a local UNC issue. Besides, you can't bite off a chunk of meat that big every week.

So here it goes. Last week I argued that many liberals in American politics have stopped trying to persuade other Americans to agree with their ideas. Instead, liberals have developed a habit of trying to silence or destroy groups that disagree with them. Since liberals are widely known for their self-proclaimed love of tolerance, I called this habit "hypocritical."

To illustrate the phenomenon, I related the story of Tufts Christian Fellowship, which was booted from Tufts University by a liberal student government because it refused to elect a bisexual woman to its leadership team. (TCF believes that homosexual acts are sinful.) I commented that Tufts had decimated religious freedom on its campus by banning religious views with which it disagrees.

Several left-leaning readers offered thoughtful feedback. One pointed out that not all liberals engage in the type of intimidation and censorship described in my article. This is (of course) true. There are still some leftists who really want to protect free speech — even when conservative or religious speakers disagree with them. I didn't say that there weren't such liberals. But lately, they have been in the minority.

Another reader argued that Tufts is a private university, and can thus legally make any ideological rules it wants. This is also true. If



CRAIG WARNER
HARSH LIGHT

Tufts wants to ban traditional Christian belief from its campus, it probably has the right to do so.

But Tufts also fancies itself a fortress of intellectual freedom. The Tufts mission statement claims to "value a diverse community ... of different races, religions ... where differences are understood and respected." Hopefully, we can all see the hypocrisy in a university that claims to value intellectual diversity and then exiles the first group that disagrees with it about something important. Finally, one reader argued that the Tufts episode was not enough to prove that liberals had developed a tendency to silence and destroy groups that disagree with them. He asked me to give him some more examples of leftist coercion.

Fair enough. But exactly how many examples is enough to "prove" a tendency? If I list six episodes of censorship and coercion, will we all agree that the left is acting hypocritically? Or 12? What if I mentioned a thousand "isolated" incidents?

When the Vatican refused to back down from its strong pro-life beliefs, left-wing feminists tried to exile it from the United Nations. When anti-affirmative action activist Ward Connerly traveled to UNC, liberal "protesters" stormed the lecture hall and denied him the right to speak.

At Cornell University, two separate printings of the conservative "Cornell Review" were stolen and burned by members of the Black Student Union. The BSU President called the action a victory for "free speech."

At Yale, a similar theft was actually aided

by a dean of the university. I could list examples of leftist speech-trampling and argument-by-coercion for the rest of this column.

But that would be a waste of space. Some liberals simply aren't going to be convinced — because they really believe it is acceptable to violate the constitutional rights of certain "evil" groups of Americans.

Of course, we're expected to allow these same liberals to decide exactly which groups are "evil." But I'm sure we can trust them. After all, they've done such an amazing job protecting free speech.

One other item has been on my mind this week: I'm taking an excellent history course this semester on the Civil War. The class has more than 100 students, but I've noticed that there is only one black student enrolled.

I could be wrong, but I seem to recall that the Civil War was an event of some consequence for the African-American community. So why on earth are African-American students at UNC avoiding this exceptionally well-taught class?

Could it be that they've been ushered instead into lightweight "complain about America" sociology courses like African American Studies 40 by administrators who have no respect for the African-American intellect?

Or have African-American students decided that American history (even the part about the war over slavery) doesn't concern them?

In either case, the results are devastating. My Civil War course is taught in an all-white classroom. UNC African-Americans are not learning about the most momentous event in American history. Blacks and whites at UNC are becoming more divided every day.

And here I thought that the "separate but equal" doctrine on education died with the Jim Crow laws.

Craig Warner is a senior political science major from Latrobe Pa. who thinks that Calvin and Hobbes is fine art. To rant at him, send emails to cmwarner@email.unc.edu.

READERS' FORUM

Reader Encourages More Involvement With DiPhi Debates

TO THE EDITOR:

While grateful to columnist McKinney for his description of the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies as "the oldest" and "most respected organizations on campus" ("Fanning UNC's Intellectual Flames" Aug. 31), I'm disappointed by the conclusion he drew about DiPhi's role in promoting the intellectual life at UNC.

McKinney and anyone else interested in promoting useful knowledge should join DiPhi at our meetings this semester — debate topics include "Morality Is Objective," "Conformity Benefits Society More Than Individualism" and "The Carolina Computing Initiative Is Beneficial to the University." Once in a while, as McKinney noted, DiPhi like to have a little fun by debating for debate's sake; but he need not assume we are failing in our 206-year-old service to the University and its community.

Furthermore, DiPhi are, not the only groups on campus that are high-

ly successful in promoting the intellectual climate, and I suspect more freshmen will participate in these groups throughout the year than will have read McKinney's summer reading book — but that's just a guess.

Still, rather than arguing about which effort most enhances the academic life, we ought to be putting our heads together to better the intellectual climate. DiPhi welcome any suggestions, including McKinney's, about how that might be done.

Brandon Briscoe
President, Joint Senate of the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies
Senior Journalism and Mass Communication

Milk "Propaganda" Does Not Always "Do A Body Good"

TO THE EDITOR:

No doubt you are correct to take People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals to task for its insensitive portrayal of cancer patients in its current

anti-milk campaign ("Bad Taste's Poster Child," Sept. 1). Now I hope you will apply the same scrutiny to the far more powerful dairy industry, which, though adept and tactful at public relations, is as irresponsible as PETA when pursuing its agenda.

Milk is believed by most Americans to be the quintessential healthful drink, a symbol of all that is pure (white) and good, loaded with essential calcium and vitamin D. In fact, not only has milk never been shown to prevent osteoporosis, several studies have indicated it may contribute to many ailments including sinus congestion, resistance to antibiotics and, yes, prostate cancer.

The dairy industry distorts research in its commercials and lobbies the Department of Agriculture to maintain the ridiculous pro-milk slant of the supposedly scientific "food pyramid."

PETA has shown poor judgement, but the dairy industry outdoes all comers with its cynical propaganda disguised as soggy medical advice.

Daniel Brezenoff
Class of 2000



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