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**The War on the War on Drugs**

Has the United States declared war on itself? This is a good question with the prominence of the United States’ war on drugs. This war in a vicious police crackdown on many criminals to reduce not only drug use, and trafficking, but also any other type of drug related crime such as murder. This may seem like an amazing idea to help protect the citizens of the country, and to save them from much of the violence created today, just because of drugs. However, things never seem to go as planned, and much more sinister undertones have surfaced because of this supposed war. This good-natured concept has been twisted by many things such as political corruption, and just general discrimination against minorities I believe the war on drugs need to be abolished, because of the amount of political corruption, and mass incarceration it has caused, as well as the general ineffectiveness of the entire “War” itself.

While the war has seemed to give many Americans a sense of security knowing that it removes criminals off the street, it is not actually as effective as many may believe. The entire point of this war was to try and stop many of the crimes committed in the modern day United States, however both drug users, and traffickers have complete disregard for the laws of the country, and are almost acting above the law by the war that has been declared on them. Unfortunately, people not only believe that it is working, they also believe that it is the best way to handle the crisis facing the United States. This pushes the idea that any other ideas will not only be ineffective, but may help drug cartels, and users. However, other countries have found ways to reduce the amount of drug use in their own country through some seemingly unorthodox methods. One of these countries is Portugal, who instead of cracking down on drug use has decided to repeal all laws for use, and possession of any drugs. The movie “Where to Invade Next” by “Michael Moore” discussed the strange policies used by Portugal. He has an interesting dialogue with a drug expert from Portugal on how the policies have affected the country.

“” Have you had an increase in drug-related crimes as a result of...”

“No. If there's less people using, there will be less people causing troubles because they are using.”

“Okay, wait a minute. You're saying that by decriminalizing all drugs, not throwing people in jail, drug usage went down, not up?”

“Mm-hmm.”

“Um...”

“When you think about drug users, everybody thinks about those small 10% that are causing problems. People don't think about the 90% of people that are not causing any troubles although they are using illicit substances.””

This dialogue is important because it shows other countries are having success with their own drug epidemics without forceful measures. This means that the United States can be fine without their forceful war, and they can still see a decline in drug related crimes.

Supporters of the war may argue that Portugal is a much smaller country than the United States, and that the moving of the policies over the states may be ineffective due to sheer size, and lack of control. This is a valid argument, and has some thought put into it. However, this is not necessarily correct because the United States may be much larger, but with the structure of the government in the United States allows states to control their own laws, and can even go farther down by working laws into individual cities, and towns. This means that we can essentially ration these policies into places even smaller than Portugal allowing them to be effective, and under control regardless of how many people will be affected by them.

Political corruption has been another terrible side effect of this new war being waged on drugs. The average American may not read too much into it, and will feel just happy hearing that a political official wants to tackle the issue. However, for the most part these promises never come to fruition. There always seems to be some other type of motive behind their seemingly good intentions. For the most part this war is abused by candidates for office. They know it is an issue people want to hear about, so they will use it to gain leverage in an election. They do this by just promising to do something about the issue even though they do not intend to do anything about it, so they are lying directly to their supporters. The article “Emergency in Name Only” by “Jessica Hamzelou” takes a look at the most recent president Donald Trump, and how he handled the issue.

“In October last year, President Donald Trump acknowledged the scale of the crisis by declaring a public health emergency. This temporary emergency period lasted only 90 days, and expired on 23 January. A renewal has already been announced, but during the first emergency period, the administration has achieved little, if anything.”

This is interesting because it shows that this is a current issue facing the United States, and that the war on drugs should be stripped away as to make politicians much more honest with their supporters so we all know what is happening behind the scenes, and everyone can feel more comfortable in their own lives. However, this is not the only source of political corruption caused by this war. Many presidents have used this war to conceal their real intentions, or to even justify their horrific actions against other countries. They use this term to justify the invasion of many south American countries, only on the basis that they have drugs. However, they have a darker meaning to them in that the United States only wants to secure more wealth for itself through oil, and other goods they may get from the country due to these invasions. This is awful because not only does it take rights away from foreign countries, but it also puts United States citizen’s lives on the line for no good reason. This shows an immense amount of political corruption in the fact that the people running the country are willing to sacrifice the lives of other people to gain wealth for themselves. Many people have commented on this issue including “John Lindsay-Poland” who wrote the article “A Flexible War” which comments on the same exact issue by saying:

“These days, the “war on drugs” no longer represents the primary discourse used to rationalize U.S. military involvement in Latin America. It’s a phrase that has become increasingly discredited both at home and abroad as ineffective and harmful. Instead, U.S. politicians have turned their focus toward how best to suppress the arrival of refugees and other migrants at the U.S. border, while U.S. military commanders testify about the threat of “transnational organized crime,” a term that is used to encapsulate much more than drug trafficking alone.”

This clearly supports the point in how the war on drugs in no longer that, but almost a war on the ideals of other countries, and refugees.

Almost related to political corruption is the huge increase to incarceration rates that the supposed war created. This is not only bad because it puts a large portion of the United States population in prison, but it is also being directed at minorities by issuing harsher sentences to different races, while allowing whites to get off much easier. An article titled “Is the War on Drugs Succeeding?” by “Robb London” really gives some scope as to how much of an issue mass incarceration caused by this war is.

### Drug use is down over the last 25 years, but a half million Americans are in prison for drug offenses. How should success be measured?

This seems like a ridiculous amount of people to be in prison for only drugs, even though this war was supposed to stop the amount of drug use within the United States. Many of these people are in for only a small amount being on their person, yet they are thrown into prison the same as everyone else regardless of how much they have, because of the advancement of this war. This must be stopped to protect the rights of maty United States citizens. These incarceration rates also are disproportionate for African Americans, and they almost seem to be targeted more for this. This is done to continue the segregation of their race in a legal way, even if it is unethical. The author “Lauren Carroll” explains this in her article “How the War on Drugs Affected Incarceration Rates” by saying:

### “In a 2014 article, Rothwell found that the war on drugs has significantly impacted black people. He found that white people are more likely than black people to sell drugs and about as likely to consume them. Even so, black people are 3.6 times more likely than white people to be arrested for selling drugs and 2.5 times more for drug possession.”

### This shows hard statistics of how African Americans are being targeted for incarceration even on a mass scale, again showing that this war need to be stopped.

### While I believe the war in drugs was a good idea at first, and done with good intentions, I now believe that it has been twisted into an ugly tool to be used by people in power to get whatever they want. The original sentiment has almost been completely erased in this regard, and it makes me fear how much they will try to do with just a simple term. I believe to make this country a better place we must end this, and we must uphold the statement “Liberty, and Justice for all.”