

Elephants & Donkeys by Kathleen Klenetsky

Bush, Dukakis team up to wreck war on drugs

George Bush and Mike Dukakis have caught on to the fact that American voters view the drug plague as one of the country's leading problems, and are consequently vying with each other for the anti-drug warrior-of-the-year award.

But despite all the campaign-trail brouhaha which this has generated of late, in the real world, both candidates have in fact aided and abetted the dope lobby, and should be held responsible for its campaign to turn Americans into a bunch of doped-up zombies.

Take Bush: Stung by Dukakis's charges that the Reagan administration's war on drugs has been a chaotic failure, and by revelations concerning his connections to the drug-running Contras, Bush has been casting about for some gimmick to bolster his badly tattered anti-drug image.

In June, he endorsed a new House Republican measure which seeks to shift the country's war on drugs away from stopping the influx of illegal narcotics into the United States, into an ineffectual campaign to reduce demand, by focusing on the domestic consumer.

Although efforts to crack down on dope use certainly have their part to play in a comprehensive anti-drug campaign, anything that lessens the pressure on the supply and distribution networks is a grievous mistake, one which will only make it easier for

drugs to enter the United States. With all of his experience with the drug issue, Bush certainly knows that.

Like everything cooked up by the Heritage Foundation, the legislative package is a bad joke—so bad that it must have the international drug mafia in stitches at this abject surrender. Instead of beefing up U.S. surveillance and interdiction capabilities, and boosting aid to drug-producing countries that are desperately fighting drug traffickers, the bill focuses on the consumer, calling for such penalties as denying drivers' licenses and federal grants, like student loans, to convicted drug users and traffickers. This might help deter the casual user—if funds were really committed to enforcement. But is it really supposed to stop an addict, or someone raking in millions of dollars through drug sales?

Yet Bush, who attended the June 15 Capitol Hill press conference where the proposal was unveiled, embraced it as "better than anything the Democrats are going to produce."

The House program comes directly out of a drug policy project being conducted by the Heritage Foundation, the supposedly conservative think tank which houses various socialists, libertarians, and related types.

Program director Jeff Eisenach disclosed in May that he has been holding regular briefings on the Hill, sponsored by Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas) and others, to push the idea that "surveillance and interdiction aren't working," and that Washington's "current drug policy is such a failure, that if we don't shift it dramatically, the drive for legalization will become unstoppable."

According to Eisenach, his Capitol Hill briefings carry this message: "Why continue to go after the drug kingpins and the pushers, when that hasn't achieved anything? What we need to do is go after the 23 million

Americans who use drugs monthly. If we take away their drivers' licenses, maybe they'll stop using drugs."

Dukakis 'will legalize drugs'

As for Dukakis, who's been running around recently calling the Reagan administration's anti-drug effort a chaotic failure, he's being looked to as a champion by the dope lobby. At the annual national conference of NORML (the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws) which took place in Washington over the June 18 weekend, Yippie spokesman Dana Beal stated bluntly that if Dukakis were to be elected President, "he would legalize marijuana."

Beal's hopes are not misplaced. Dukakis's home state of Massachusetts has some of the most liberal drug laws in the nation. You can be caught with over 10,000 pounds of marijuana there, and, if it is your first offense, you will receive no jail term and no fine—only probation. A first-offense cocaine-possession conviction carries a penalty of 0-3½ years.

Perhaps this is what Dukakis really means by his "Massachusetts miracle"!

Furthermore, Dukakis's chief representative to the committee drafting the Democratic Party platform, former Congressman Michael Barnes, belongs to the Inter-American Dialogue, the Aspen Institute project which has called for legalizing drugs, as a way of allowing drug-producing countries in the Third World to get enough foreign exchange to pay back their debts to the major money-center banks.

If Dukakis were truly opposed to drugs, the first thing he'd do would be to toughen up his own state's laws. The second would be to fire Barnes.