

Costa: Drug Legalization Is New Opium War

March 22—Here is an excerpt from Antonio Maria Costa's remarks to the March 13 Google/YouTube Internet debate on drug legalization, in which he participated with Gen. Barry McCaffrey (ret.), and former New York Attorney General and Governor Eliot Spitzer.

With a passion uncommon in today's jaded culture, Costa went straight after the British East India Company's Opium Wars against China in his remarks:

Those arguing for legalization in the debate say, "Stop the war on drugs." I say stop *all* drug wars. Let me explain.

The people at this table represent 10% of humanity, and we propose drug policy for the world, forgetting the drug crime which we perpetrated? You see, in 2012, we celebrate a dreadful anniversary, one that makes my guts twist and turn: 150 years from the end of the Opium Wars, when the West, our countries, forced China to consume drugs. At that time, just like now, greedy investors—it was the East India Company as you recall—wanted to make money by poisoning the Chinese with opium. China opposed this. Our countries went to war; our countries won the war and forced the Chinese to consume drugs for



U.S. State Department
Former New York Gov. Eliot
Spitzer



U.S. Army
Gen. Barry McCaffrey (ret.)

a century. Tens of millions of people died in China from addiction, war, and famine.

The tragedy of drug legalization *we* forced on China dwarfs what is happening in Mexico, in Guatemala, Colombia, etc.

To conclude, when I hear investors in Europe and North America advocating drug legalization, behind the fig leaves of a campaign to stop the war on drugs, I cringe, and I say: Stop all drug wars, whether fought by bullets or by bombs; investors' greed can be as harmful as mafia guns. Drugs have come from both sides of the aisle, therefore vote no, and vote against this motion [to legalize].