

erasty in the Far East," Young wrote last December. "Apparently this association has no problem with the funding of such behavior—just with the funding of writers who want to expose it." And so it devolved into a classic Beltway rumble of finger-wagging sanctimony.

Halfway around the world, a different picture emerges: It's civilians who appear to be the problem, not U.S. servicemen. During an April port call, the 5,000 or so Navy personnel out for a good carouse seemed almost to lift the town from its desperation.

Which is not to say they are perfect gentlemen. At the High Fives Bar, a sailor picked up a girl with the line "Nice tits." She was soon nestled on his knee, giggling and gibbering while he drank with his pals. He stumbled out a half-hour later, though, the madam hissing from behind the bar and the girl desperately tugging at him to stay.

On the Walking Street, a blocked-off area of tattoo parlors, cheap hotels, and brothels, four young servicemen were on the prowl. "I just want to see two girls get it on," said a hapless 22-year-old sailor from Austin, Texas. "Is that so wrong?" His inability to find a lesbian floor show did give one the sense he could fall out of a boat and not hit water. To appearances they were here just to get drunk, play a little grab-ass, and protest a little too loudly when their buddies inevitably dragged them away to the next watering hole.


At the Royal Cliff resort, where the officers are billeted, a senior official with the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok allowed that "every once in a while we'll get a call in the middle of the night" from local Thai authorities about rowdy sailors. Shore Patrol will pick the boys up and read them the Riot Act. But the diplomat claims never to have heard of a serviceman being charged with pedophilia.

Back in Arlington, Virginia, a spokeswoman for the Navy's Judge Advocate General claimed (improbably) that the agency does not keep a database of prosecutions and convictions for overseas pedophilia. But, she volunteered, "the

Navy regards any type of sexual exploitation as morally abhorrent, and any involvement by Navy personnel will not be tolerated." The Navy advises servicemen on the moral and health risks associated with the sex trade, and also works with international organizations opposing sexual exploitation. Perhaps one of these was responsible for the "Stop Child Sex Tourism" sign hanging in a public bathroom in tiny Mae Sot, a smugglers' conduit for hill-tribe children being shipped south for sex.

It is a federal crime punishable by up to ten years' imprisonment for a U.S. national to travel abroad and engage in sex with a minor.

The JAG spokeswoman says, "Service members charged with sexual crimes are actually subject to more punishment...than civilians." But the largest deterrent for sailors seems to be word of mouth (as the captain in Young's book says, "Pattaya...is the home of the black clap, completely resistant to penicillin") and the sailors' own innate decency. As a rueful pimp flashing wallet-size pictures of boys and girls for sale told me, "Tourist very good for me. No sailor."

Walking along the beach, a young girl not more than 15 hawks a scrawny boy. She says he's her brother, and the way he clasps her hand and hides behind her suggests it might just be the case. 

Puff Daddy Johnson

New Mexico's governor calls for a drug peace.

BY TOM BETHELL

Alcohol was the drug of choice at the Cato Institute's reception for Gary Johnson, the Republican governor of New Mexico. In 1999 he called for the legalization of marijuana, and he was in town to address the annual conference of the National Organization for Reform of the Marijuana Laws. Standing nearby was Keith Stroup, who founded NORML in 1970. He was discussing the government surveys purporting to show a decline in drug use since 1979. "The peak year for illicit drug use was 1979," Stroup said. "Claiming that we are winning the war on drugs by showing a decline from the highest point doesn't prove anything." The decline continued until the early 1990s, but it has since reversed. Stroup also questioned any survey where the interviewer's preamble goes something like this: "I'm from the federal government and I'd like to ask you a few questions about drug use in your household." (The surveys are sponsored by the Department of Health and



Human Services.) Underreporting is assured. Seventy-six million Americans say they have used marijuana at some point in their lives, according to the latest (government) figures.

Governor Johnson, first elected in 1994, waited until he was reelected before bringing up the drug issue. Term limits prevent him from seeking the office again. Slim and tousle-haired at 48, Johnson called the incarceration of marijuana smokers "the biggest civil rights issue that

ISMAEL ROLDAN

is going unaddressed today.” As a student he smoked enough of it to realize that all the dire warnings about marijuana’s effects were not true. Today he does not touch alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana, and does not advocate their use. But “if you are going to smoke marijuana in the confines of your own home,” he said to the crowd in the Cato atrium, “doing no harm to anybody, arguably other than yourself, should that be criminal? No, I don’t think that should be criminal.”

Clinton’s drug czar, General Barry McCaffrey, comfortable with the idea of

about “reefer madness” have been shown to be lies—if anything the opposite of the truth. Unlike alcohol, which was re-legalized at about the same time that marijuana was criminalized, marijuana tends to induce a tranquil mood in those who smoke it. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 110,640 Americans died in 1996 due to alcohol. No doubt the figure is inflated; organizations devoted to rooting out some alleged evil always exaggerate its importance. But exhaustive searches of the literature by various organiza-

intervenied, Congress blocked a count of the ballots, thanks mainly to the efforts of Rep. Bob Barr of Georgia. He wants to ensure that “our nation’s capital does not legalize any mind-altering drugs.”

At the NORML conference, retired Sun Microsystems millionaire John Gilmore said he would be contributing “a million dollars a year for ten years” to educate the public on the war on drugs. A co-founder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, he addressed the “mind-altering” notion, which underlies essentially all government efforts against recreational drugs. The drug war presumes the government should be regulating our mental states. “It is claiming the right to control our thought,” he said. Put that way, the most apparently obvious argument for the war on drugs seems obviously wrong. “What goes on in our own minds is our responsibility.”

A key argument against the drug laws was made by Rep. Barney Frank of Massachusetts. It has also been made by Milton Friedman and William F. Buckley. With drug-law violations, there are no complaining witnesses. The entire population is therefore potentially subject to unreasonable search and seizure. “If we are robbed, or mugged, if our cars are vandalized, or our homes are burglarized, we become the best friends of the police,” Frank said. “We are the victims of the crime, and what we most want to do is to give the police information to help them solve the crime.” But with drug transactions “you are telling the police to prevent something where all the parties to the transaction are going to resist giving the police any help. Normal police techniques don’t work.” So the police are “driven to violate people’s privacy in combating drugs by the nature of the so-called crime as we have defined it.”

The drug war “accounts for a majority of all government-authorized wiretaps in this country,” said Ethan Nadelmann, the director of the Lindesmith Center-Drug Policy Foundation in New York, an institute that seeks an end to marijuana

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militarized law enforcement, held a press conference in New Mexico after Johnson’s apostasy and called him “Puff Daddy Johnson,” a man pushing a “pro-drug message.”

More than five million Americans were arrested for marijuana offenses in the 1990s, making it the fifth most common criminal offense in the United States. Over 700,000 individuals were arrested on marijuana charges in 1999—more than the total number arrested for all violent crimes combined, including murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. At least 60,000 individuals are behind bars for marijuana offenses, at a cost to taxpayers of \$1.2 billion a year. Of the 150,000 federal prisoners, three times as many as when Reagan left office, 58 percent are inside for drug offenses. The best estimate is that, of the 700,000 people in local jails, 20 to 25 percent are imprisoned for drug-law violations. Bumper sticker at the NORML conference: “If you don’t care about the people sent to prison for smoking marijuana, at least consider who gets released to make room for them.”

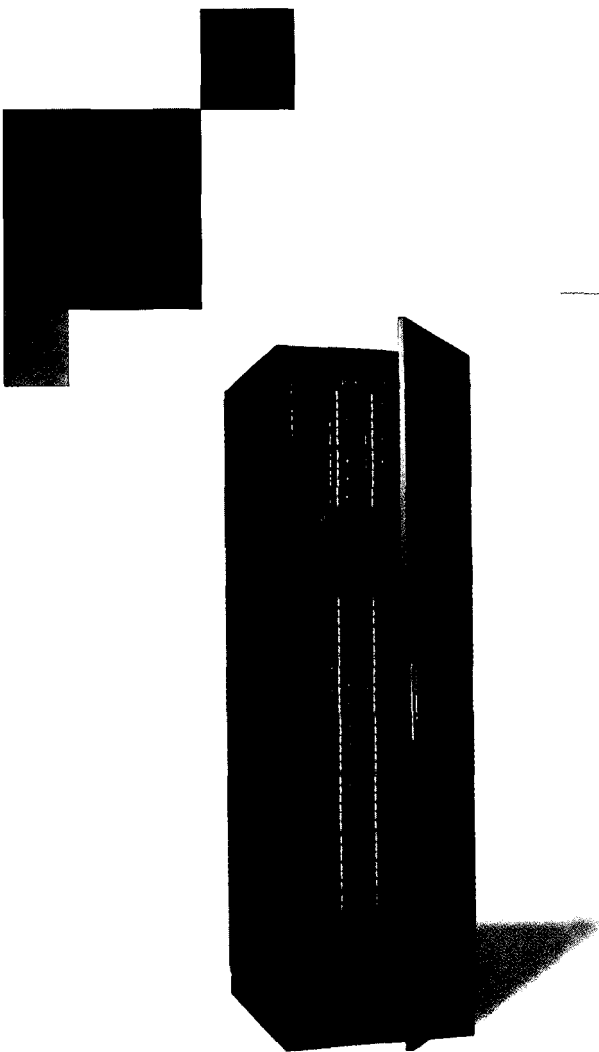
State and federal laws against marijuana were enacted in the 1930s, based mainly on reports by police chiefs and prosecutors that the weed causes people to commit violent crimes. All of these claims

tions have found no deaths directly induced by marijuana. Marijuana smokers don’t “overdose.”

Gov. Johnson told me the initial response in New Mexico was that he was “irresponsible, crazy.” Today, he thinks he may leave office at the end of 2002 with a favorable rating about what it was when he came in—60 percent. On drugs, his most prominent opponent has been Sen. Pete Domenici (R-Beltway). Johnson’s wife, Dee Simms, also at the Cato reception, said that the drug issue was “radioactive.” When she is with the wives of other politicians, no one brings the subject up, she said. “Every day he stands, he shows that you can survive with the issue.” Nationwide, public opinion on the issue is volatile and uncertain. Democrats are more willing to decriminalize marijuana use. But they are afraid of being called soft on drugs. Hence the importance of Gov. Johnson’s heresy. The Republican leadership in Congress has not given an inch.

The active ingredients in marijuana are useful for treating pain and nausea and stimulating appetite, and nine states have passed initiatives allowing its medical use. No such initiative has been defeated. In the District of Columbia, a medical-use initiative passed with 68 percent of the vote in 1998, but until a federal judge

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prohibition. "The war on drugs is the number one reason for the use of informants, and the number one reason for the use of undercover agents, and it has supplied the justification for their virtually limitless use."

The lack of complaining witnesses also corrupts law enforcement. It is easier to make a case go away with a bribe when there is no plaintiff to press the matter. As Nadelmann pointed out, the lack of plaintiffs also means that prosecutions depend more on criminal testimony obtained by "offering people deals and bargains in order to get them to testify against others. So we are creating a corruption of the system, where more and more people are sent to jail on the word of others who have been convicted or threatened with conviction, and whose testimony is suspect."

Some "racial profiling" is a direct consequence of the drug war, Barney

Frank added. "The New Jersey state police explicitly defended themselves against the racial profiling charge by saying, 'We were just doing what the federal government

best kept 'off the streets.' Also, marijuana has 'historically been seen by a lot of Americans as the badge of the counter-culture,' Barney Frank said, and an

So we are creating a corruption of the system, where more and more people are sent to jail on the word of others who have been convicted or threatened with conviction.

asked us to do. They asked us to stop these drug couriers, and most of them are blacks and Hispanics.' "

Studies have shown that the majority of people who use and sell drugs are white. Yet 94 percent of the 25,000 drug offenders locked up in New York state prisons are black or Hispanic. Such civil-rights arguments rarely appeal to conservatives, however. In part they don't think about them. If they do, they imagine that "druggies" are worthless and dangerous—

"emblem of the politically dissatisfied."

But another point, a political one, emerged several times in the conference. This time conservatives may want to pay attention. It is more a prediction than an argument. Today, the states are far closer to changing the drug laws than the federal government. With medical marijuana ballot initiatives so successful, state legislatures will surely follow suit (Hawaii already has). It is only a matter of time before a state outright decriminalizes marijuana. At that point the

Global warming? Try getting out of the sun

James Glassman interviews Dr. Sallie Baliunas

Dr. Sallie Baliunas of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics is one of the world's experts on the sources of climate change. Baliunas argues that natural variations in the sun's energy closely correlate with known changes in Earth temperatures over the centuries. Baliunas believes such natural variations account for nearly all of the global warming trend of the 20th century, while human impact has been at most "tiny." James Glassman, American Enterprise Institute fellow, long-time host of the late, lamented Techno-Politics, and publisher of the Website TechCentralStation, recently interviewed Baliunas. We reprint a brief edited excerpt here. To see the full interview go to www.techcentralstation.com.

JAMES K. GLASSMAN: Dr. Baliunas, we've heard that temperatures have increased on Earth over the last century. Were temperatures stable before that?

DR. SALLIE BALIUNAS: The temperature of the Earth has increased over the last 100

years.... The warming began early in the 20th century, late in the 19th century. But before that, there was a very long, protracted cooling that began in the 14th century that continued to the mid-19th century—a 500-year relative cold spell called the Little Ice Age. Before that, 800 or 1,000 years ago—the early part of the millennium—the temperature was even higher than today, worldwide....

GLASSMAN: How can you tell?

BALIUNAS: The thermometers go back only about 100 years or so over some substantial portion of the Earth. Then we have to rely on other records.... For example, growth of tree rings is retarded during cold times usually and then is more advanced during warm times.... Glaciers advance and retreat, mountain glaciers, polar glaciers. Coral growth rings tell us about the temperature of the ocean.

GLASSMAN: If there was global warming before the 20th century...what caused it?

BALIUNAS: When the sun's magnetism is strong, the sun's energy output is higher and the Earth is warmer.... We measured that carefully over the last 20 years with satellites from the Earth, and we measured it indirectly going back 400 years, 1,000 years, and 10,000 years.

GLASSMAN: Now, have you actually correlated the activity of the sun, this magnetism that you're talking about, with the rise of temperatures on Earth?

BALIUNAS: Yes, the correlation is very strong. For the temperature records going back on Earth, we can reconstruct the Northern Hemisphere about 250 years or so. And the ups and downs of temperature match almost exactly the ups and downs and change in magnetism, and so, the energy output of the sun....

GLASSMAN: Has there been solar activity over the last hundred years that would correlate with the temperature on Earth?

BALIUNAS: Yes, it correlates almost exactly ■