

The old English Empire was the founder and leader of the drug trade. This government saw the drug trade, particularly Opium, as a good means to increase its treasury and promote the overall economy to benefit its citizens with jobs and industry. The English would grow and cultivate the opium crops in India and then sell the finish product to the Chinese. The wealth accrued by this system was enormous and it made this nation with such a small population rule other nations with populations exponentially greater. It was about power and wealth.

Today, the United States gives the appearance that drugs are evil and it must do everything in its power to suppress the drug trade. That is the appearance but the reality is far from that. Drugs are prevalent in the United States more now than ever before. It is an extremely large industry with no restraints and a future that seems very bright. At the low end of the trade business are law enforcement agencies locking up users and small traders. At the high end are drug cartels dragging in billions of dollars. The final phase of this industrial transaction is the cleaning or laundering of the dirty money. The largest banks in the world are far too willing to accommodate the drug cartels. They clean the money and give advice on tax avoidance. It is purely criminal but no one is going to jail.

Just last week the U.S. Department of Justice settled such a case with banking giant HSBC. According to Rolling Stone magazine, "The banks' laundering transactions were so brazen that the NSA probably could have spotted them from space. Breuer (Assistant U.S. Attorney General) admitted that drug dealers would sometimes come to HSBC's Mexican branches and "deposit hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash, in a single day, into a single account, using boxes designed to fit the precise dimensions of the teller windows." Yes, they had it down to a finely run routine without fear of arrest or punishment.

For the above criminal activity HSBC received no indictment and no arrests were made at all. Simply, the government settled with them on a fine of \$1.9 billion. They even had the nerve to do a press release on this. The fact is that this was no punishment at all. HSBC makes \$1.9 billion in profit every 5 business days. I can assure you that they won't stop the activity because the money is just too good.

Meanwhile, out in the streets and neighborhoods, the law authorities are locking up our population with a vengeance. Stiff penalties are handed out to users and low level dealers in rapid fashion. Long sentences are served in our prisons. In fact, our prisons are filling up to the point that they are now cramming our local jails with drug offenders. The rich get richer and the poor go to jail and have their futures terribly damaged. This happens because there is so much

profit in the drug business. How do we get the profit out of drugs? There is a model. In Amsterdam drugs are legal in designated areas. People can go and buy the drugs at terribly low prices and get as high as they want. You won't see the cartels doing much activity here as they cannot make the kind of big cash they are accustomed to.

Why don't we do the same as Amsterdam? Let's identify designated places and provide medical assistance to those trying to break the addiction and control the price of drugs to where the gangsters no longer have an incentive. Also, let us stop prosecuting and jailing our people for this activity. In fact, let's start emptying our prisons and jails of drug users and low level traffickers. Bring these people home and work them back into society as productive and full citizens. There would be a dramatically reduced public expense – fewer prisons; fewer guards; fewer lawyers and many other good things like happier families and bright futures for our children.

Oh, it would be so nice to see the cartels dry up and hard crime such as kidnapping, murder, overall violence would be reduced to almost nothing. Every African American family has been damaged or affected by the drug industry. Children, cousins, nephews, husbands, mothers and fathers are missing from our households because of the lure of illegal drug activity. The rich and powerful take part in this and get away with it as the common people suffer immensely. It is just like old China and the British opportunists. The playing field is hardly level. Let us start to go down this road to the legalization of drugs and end this social and economic madness.

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