

Reason 6

The Netherlands' Spectacular Success

There has never been a drug-free society in the history of the world and the United States has proven irrefutably that there never will be.

Stephen H. Frye, M.D.

The Netherlands is often called Holland and its citizens are the Dutch. They have indisputably and unequivocally proved that decriminalization/legalization works and is remarkably effective.

Calamitous Human Cost of Our Failed Policies

Although we imprison six times as many of our citizens as the Dutch (7,150 people U.S. versus 1,120 Dutch per million, or pm population), the U.S. murder rate is still 400% — or 4 times — greater than theirs (40 U.S. versus 10 Dutch pm). In spite of these huge numbers of needless incarcerations, our U.S. rate of drug offenses is still 1,200% — or 12 times — higher than the Netherlands (5,600 U.S. versus 470 Dutch pm). Despite all these life-ruining imprisonments, look at all the additional, unnecessary social devastation we have compared to the Netherlands' success.

These figures do not include all the U.S. crimes, tragedies, diseases, and deaths, just our additional ones, compared to the Netherlands. Millions of these avoidable, extra, life-ruining incidents occurred and they affected many more millions of family members, including tens of millions of children and teenagers. (See chart in book.)

Drugs have been decriminalized in the Netherlands for thirty-two years, since 1976. The second column of figures displays the true cumulative extent of this calamity and it's calculated conservatively as it's only multiplied by twenty-eight years, instead of thirty-two.

It's hard to imagine us tolerating a third of a million additional murders, forty-three million additional drug offenses, two million additional robberies, and fifty million additional imprisonments on behalf of a lost cause. Add to these almost four hundred thousand additional suicides, forty million additional assaults, fourteen thousand additional child-abuse deaths, and 1.6 million additional rapes and the toll of human suffering is incomprehensible. Every one of these preventable human tragedies could be avoided if we legalized drugs.

The Netherlands' primary concern is health and they want no hindrance to getting treatment. Thus, the use of drugs is not a punishable offense. They have a proven record of colossal success for three decades, yet we continue to ignore it, and even worse, lie about it.

Furthermore, "Ten nations in Western Europe: Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom all have a smaller drug problem than the United States, whether measured by drug use, addiction, or drug-related violence. ... Two nations, Italy and Spain, de-penalized the possession of drugs several decades ago, and all ten nations enforce their drug laws less aggressively than the United States."(1)

To further highlight the deficiencies of our policy, the Netherlands has less than half of our road deaths per 100,000 people. Could this amazing safety record, which Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) would envy, be related to the availability of marijuana, the infinitely safer medical, recreational, and party drug?

