Bill Clinton on Drugs

Medical marijuana ok; leave recreational pot to the states

Q: Back in the '60s, there was that saying, "Give peace a chance." I'm wondering if you think now it's time to give pot a chance, like they're trying in Colorado. Would it actually help government raise revenue?

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON: Rocky Mountain high? Look, I think there's a lot of evidence to argue for the medical marijuana thing. I think there are a lot of unresolved questions. But I think we should leave it to the states. This really is a time when there should be laboratories of democracy because nobody really knows where this is going. Are there adequate quality controls? There's pot and there's pot; what's in it? What's going to happen? There are all these questions. And I think that, unlike where it is now, if the state wants to try it, they can. And then they'll be able to see what happens.

Source: Meet the Press 2014 interview by David Gregory, Jun 29, 2014

Fight war on drugs in all of the Andean states

The United States had trained and equipped Colombian security forces through Plan Colombia. The Clinton administration had begun a massive and comprehensive program to augment security aspects of the "war on drugs" with development assistance for Colombia and its neighbors. The idea was to help ALL of the Andean states so that the defeat of the druglords in one country wouldn't simply drive them to establish operations on the territory of a vulnerable neighbor.

Source: No Higher Honor, by Condoleezza Rice, p.257, Nov 1, 2011

Work with Mexico to address drug smuggling problems

Some Mexican border police were offered five times their annual salary to look the other way on just one drug shipment. One honest prosecutor in northern Mexico had been shot more than one hundred times right in front of his house. These were the tough problems, but I thought the implementation of our agreements [between the US and Mexico] would help.

Source: My Life, by Bill Clinton, p.756, Jun 21, 2004

1984 drug arrest of brother Roger reportedly implicated Bill

The story of Roger Clinton's 1984 arrest and subsequent conviction on drug charges has been used by the Clintons for years, supposedly to demonstrate Bill's probity. According to their script, Bill as governor stood aside, allowing drug investigators to conduct the sting that nabbed Roger. After Roger's conviction, a tearful governor appeared on the courthouse steps, saying, "I feel more deeply committed than ever before to do everything I can to fight drugs in our state." Says Hillary now in her memoir, "Bill and I berated ourselves for not seeing signs of Roger's abuse and taking some kind of action to help him." Unfortunately for the Clintons, half a dozen Arkansans have testified to doing drugs with both Clinton brothers. During Roger's investigation he was videotaped saying, "I've got to get some for my brother, he's got a nose like a Hoover vacuum cleaner." The officer who conducted the sting claims Gov. Clinton shut it down prematurely to protect himself from being implicated.

Source: Madame Hillary, by R. Emmett Tyrell, p. 76-77, Feb 25, 2004
The President appointed Barry McCaffrey, a four-star general, to lead the Clinton-Gore Administration’s anti-drug strategy as the nation’s Drug Czar. In 1997, President Clinton and Director McCaffrey launched the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, the largest targeted effort ever to teach youth about the dangers of drugs. The Campaign uses the full power of the modern media to encourage young people to reject drug use, and helps parents, teachers and other responsible adults talk to kids about drugs and get more involved in the lives of young people. Illicit drug use among young people age 12-17 declined from 1997 to 1998, and the average age of first-time use went up. Overall drug use is down since its peak in the 1970’s, drug-related murders have fallen by 48 percent since 1992, and youth drug use is leveling off or declining.

Source: WhiteHouse.gov website, Aug 1, 2000

Stop the flow of illegal money to Colombia Cali cartel

With US and Columbian officials working in concert, a major crackdown on the cartels that control the world's cocaine market has succeeded in putting many drug kingpins behind bars. In mid-1996, President Clinton also signed an executive order designed to stop the flow of illegal money by the Cali cartel, a Colombian-based drug ring that authorities have described as the world's largest. The order prohibits 4 men identified as leaders of the cartel, 43 associates, and some 33 businesses--including Colombia's largest drug store chain, import-export firms, holding companies, and automobile dealers--from having access to any assets in the US or doing business with US citizens.

President Clinton also ordered the Justice, State, and Treasury departments and other agencies to jointly "identify and put on notice nations that tolerate money laundering," and forced violators to "bring their banks and financial systems into conformity" with international standards or face sanctions.


OpEd: "War on Drugs" included gum package labeling

Oddly enough, the Clinton Justice Department has seemed half-hearted in the pursuit of something that really is its duty: narcotics trafficking. Astonishingly, the Clinton Office of Drug Control Strategy has focused on such important matters as the labeling on Royal Crown Cola and the packaging of Big League Chew bubble gum. The feds contend that R.C. Cola's new "draft" label looks like beer and that Big League's bubble gum pouches resemble those for chewing tobacco and thus ultimately will lead children into drug usage. This, in part, is what counts for the Clinton administration's war on drugs.

Source: Agenda For America, by Haley Barbour, p.121-122, Apr 25, 1996

DARE to have drug-free schools

To reduce crime and violence we have to reduce the drug problem. The challenge begins in our homes, with parents talking to their children openly and firmly. It embraces our churches and synagogues, our youth groups and our schools. I challenge Congress not to cut our support for drug-free schools. People like the D.A.R.E.
officers are making a real impression on grade-school children that will give them the strength to say no when the
time comes.

Meanwhile, we continue our efforts to cut the flow of drugs into America. Tonight I am nominating General Barry
McCaffrey as America's new drug czar. General McCaffrey has earned three Purple Hearts and two Silver Stars fighting
for this country. Tonight I ask that he lead our Nation's battle against drugs at home and abroad. To succeed, he needs
a force far larger than he has ever commanded before. He needs all of us. Every one of us has a role to play on this
team.


Drug strategy to reduce both supply and demand

We have a new National Drug Control Strategy that:
- targets young people for education and prevention
- pulls drug users off the streets and puts them in treatment
- aims to reduce the cost of drug abuse to our health and welfare systems
- and seeks to block drugs at the border and cut off drugs at their source.

Source: Between Hope and History, by Bill Clinton, p. 81-82, Jan 1, 1996

My brother would not be alive today if drugs were legal

Q: What about drug legalization?

BUSH: No. I just don't believe that's the answer. And I oppose it, and I'm going to stand up and continue to oppose it.

PEROT: Any time you think you want to legalize drugs, go to a neonatal unit. Just look at those crack babies, and if
anybody can even think about legalizing drugs, they've lost me.

CLINTON: Like Mr. Perot, I have held crack babies in my arms. But I know more about this, I think, than anybody else
up here because I have a brother who's a recovering drug addict. I'm very proud of him. But I can tell you this: If drugs
were legal, I don't think he'd be alive today. I am adamantly opposed to legalizing drugs. He is alive today because of
the criminal justice system. What should we do? First, we ought to prevent more of this on the street. We need 100,000
more police on the street. I have a plan for that. Secondly, we ought to have treatment on demand. Thirdly, we ought
to have boot camps for first-time nonviolent offenders.


- Click here for definitions & background information on Drugs.
- Click here for VoteMatch responses by Bill Clinton.
- Click here for AmericansElect.org quiz by Bill Clinton.

Other past presidents on Drugs:  Bill Clinton on other issues:

Former Presidents:
- George W. Bush (R,2001-2009)
- Bill Clinton (D,1993-2001)
- George Bush Sr. (R,1989-1993)
- Gerald Ford (R,1974-1977)
- Lyndon Johnson (D,1963-1969)
- John F. Kennedy (D,1961-1963)
- Dwight Eisenhower (R,1953-1961)
- Harry S Truman (D,1945-1953)

Past Vice Presidents:
- V.P. Dick Cheney
- V.P. Al Gore
- V.P. Dan Quayle
- Sen. Bob Dole
- V.P. Walter Mondale

Abortion  Budget/Economy  Civil Rights  Corporations  Crime  Drugs  Education  Energy/Oil  Environment  Families/Children  Foreign Policy  Free Trade  Govt. Reform  Gun Control  Health Care  Homeland Security  Immigration