



Mission Viejo High School Model United Nations
29th Annual Conference
‘Through the Fire the Spirit is Forged’



Topic Synopsis
UNODC, Drug Use Prevention

I. Background of Topic

Drug use and abuse has been going on since the beginning of mankind itself. Human beings have always seemed to have a desire to eat or drink substances to change their perception on their outside world. Wine for instance had been used since the early Egyptians; and medicinal use of marijuana has been dated back to 2737 BC in China. As time went on people created what is known as “home remedies” which were used to alleviate aches, pains and various other ailments. Most of these were herbs, roots, mushrooms, or fungi. Up to this point all substances being used and or abused were naturally occurring; no refinement had occurred and isolation of specific compounds had not taken place.

Not until the nineteenth century rolled around were active substances in drugs extracted to create far more powerful narcotics. There was a period of time where some of the newly discovered substances such as morphine, laudanum, and cocaine were not regulated at all and over prescribed by doctors to cure a variety of ailments. One of the most well known examples of drug abuse occurred during the American Civil War when hundreds of thousands of wounded soldiers were given morphine to ease their battle wounds. They returned home with kits of morphine and hypodermic needles. Cocaine and Heroin were the most commonly prescribed drugs in the United States until the use of opium spread to the west, peaking in the 19th century. Just before the First World War there was an estimated 450,000 addicts in the United States.

Drug use prevention was a slow thing to come to fruition but the problems of addiction were slowly recognized. Legal measures in the United States began with the people, for example in



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1789 the first American temperance society was formed in Litchfield, Connecticut. More serious legal measures against drug abuse were not taken until 1875, when opium dens became outlawed in much of San Francisco. Following the first national drug law in 1906, the Pure Food and Drug Act, accurate labeling of patient medicines containing certain drugs including opium was required. In 1914 the Harrison Narcotic Act forbade sale of substantial doses of opiates or cocaine except by licensed doctors and pharmacies. Eventually, heroin was completely banned. Use of narcotics began to lower by the 1920's and the spirit of the temperance movement led to the prohibition of alcohol by the eighteenth amendment, which was later repealed in 1933. Beginning in the 1930's most states required antidrug education to be implemented into schools, but this was extremely radical for the time and was abandoned in the majority of schools. After the repeal of Prohibition, the Drug enforcement Administration began a campaign that attempted to portray Marijuana as an extremely dangerous, powerful, addicting substance that opened up users to other narcotics (Gate way Drug). These harsh actions had an adverse affect causing the use of marijuana along with amphetamines and tranquilizers to skyrocket in the 1950's. As we moved into the 1960's the intolerance of drug use that had characterized the earlier decades changed enormously with the social and political upheavals. During this period the previous anti-drug efforts of the government began to seem extremely ridiculous and inaccurate. Along with the complete change in attitude came a new debate over the decriminalization or possibly the legalization of drug use.

President Nixon must also be mention when looking at the history of drug use prevention. He saw the relaxing of intolerance for drug use as the first step in the destruction of our nation. He launched a vigorous campaign to turn the worldview against the decriminalization and legalization of narcotic drugs, naming this the “War on Drugs”. Drug use prevention is an issue



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that has and will continue to affect all nations and their people around the world. I encourage all delegates to research their countries previous actions taken so the committee as a whole can come up with solutions to adequately resolve the issue to the best of our abilities.

II. UN Involvement

The United Nations became extremely involved in all aspects of drug use and prevention with the creation of the UNODC. It was formed in 1997 by combining the United Nations International Drug Control Program (UNDCP) and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division in the United Nations Office at Vienna. The UNODC was established to better assist the UN in addressing a coordinated response to the issues of all things surrounding drug use whether it be the interrelated issues of drug trafficking or crime prevention and criminal justice.

One the largest accomplishments of the UNODC is the yearly publication of The World Drug Report. It presents a comprehensive assessment of the current global drug problem, with detailed information of the illicit drug situation. It provides information of trends, production, trafficking, and current use of heroin, cocaine, marijuana and amphetamine like stimulants. The World Drug Report attempts to identify trends in the evolution of illicit drug markets to direct further action.

The UN has used a large variety of tactics to attempt to make an impact on drug use and prevention. One thing they have done many times is create campaigns. One such campaign is the “Do Drugs control your life” campaign. The UNODC started this international campaign to raise awareness about the major challenge that illicit drugs represent to society as a whole and especially to the young. The goal of the campaign was to mobilize support and to inspire people to act against



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drug abuse and trafficking. The campaign basically encouraged young people to put their health first and not to take drugs. Other affective campaigns included the “Think AIDS” campaign and the Blue Heart Campaign Against Human Trafficking.

There is three drug related treaties that guide the UNODC in the majority of their decisions. The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol ; the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988

III. Possible Solutions

When looking at possible solutions to this extremely overpowering topic one must consider three main things. Reducing the supply, demand, and effects. In order to reduce the supply of narcotics there is obvious solutions such as increasing border control with neighboring nations, pressuring drug traffickers with stricter punishments, or even offering incentive programs to farmers of illicit drugs in third world countries who are struggling to a living. Other programs that would be highly beneficial to decreasing drug use prevention of a global scale include alternative development, education to all ranges of people, and a universal system for the penalization of these criminals using selling and growing illicit drugs. Possible ways to reduce the effects of drug use on society may range from legalization of narcotics, to drug use prevention.

Another thing to consider is who is being effected by drug use and who the prevention efforts should primarily focused upon. Throughout my research it seems extremely obvious that teenagers are on of the largest demographics of people experimenting with and becoming addicted to dangerous drugs. My suggestion would be to come up with a program that is similar



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to the D.A.R.E program to help rehabilitate these teenagers but to expand it to have a global reach.

IV. Bloc Positions

The United States along with Sweden has a zero tolerance policy against illicit drug use and strongly supports drug use prevention. A large majority of the Latin American bloc relies heavily on the production and trafficking of these substances to stimulate their economies. This is also true for the Middle Eastern block although the regulation of punishment in those countries is much more stringent. Many Asian countries, especially Korea have been free from drug related crimes.

V. Guiding Questions

Several question that delegates should have addressed or at least researched before showing up to debate include:

- . Who uses these drugs and why?
- . What steps can be taken to provide assistance to drug addicts?
- . How can we sustain these countries that are extremely reliant on the cultivation and use of narcotic drugs?