

'Get rough' policy needed for users

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In 1978, the New York City Bar Association did a study of the law. The law had two objectives. One was to "frighten drug users out of their habit and drug dealers out of their trade." The other was "to reduce crimes commonly associated with addiction." The study's conclusion: The law had zero effect on use or crime.

Why the panic? It's a puzzle. You wouldn't know it from the magazine covers, but the level of cocaine use has been fairly stable. Even Newsweek had to admit that "the number of regular cocaine users, which apparently peaked in the late '70s, has remained in about 5 million ever since." Every year the National Institute of Drug Abuse does a very large survey of high-school seniors. From 1979 to 1985 cocaine use increased by one percent, from 5.7 to 6.7 percent. Hardly the stuff of epidemics.

And if it were an epidemic, it is not going to be stopped by a President volunteering a urine specimen, by the U.S. Army knocking over a couple of Bolivian cocaine refineries, or by a few AWACS planes overflying the Mexican border with look-down radar. The anti-drug crusaders want to nail everyone in the chain from Bolivian coca farmer to the New York street hustler. Every one, that is, up to and excluding the American user, against whom the only weapon deployed is sympathy.

The House anti-drug bill, for example, pushes a rough, tough five-part program: eradication,

interdiction, enforcement, education and rehabilitation. Rough and tough, that is, until part five, which deals with American users, referred to as those who have "fallen victim to drugs."

Fallen victim: passive and innocent. Kids, maybe. But when it comes to the subject of the current panic, crack cocaine, kids are a very small part of the problem. "There is a gross distortion about crack," says Dr. Arnold Wash-ton, director of research for the National Cocaine Hotline, "that it is just a teen-age problem and that it is a problem of the poor." A study of 500 callers to the cocaine hotline found that of crack addicts, 54 percent are in their twenties, 36 percent are in their thirties, less than 5 percent are adolescents. A quarter earn more than \$25,000 a year.

Want to beat crack? Save the hundreds of millions in the omnibus bill. Disarm the committees. Give users, everyday ordinary users, a stiff, stinging fine and a taste of jail. Not three years to life in Attica. A year's pay and three weeks in Allenwood or Danbury or another "Watergate" hotel. Make crack so hot that ordinary people won't want to be seen near it, let alone hold it. A stretch in Allenwood does not look good on a yuppie resume.

Serious about crack? Bring our boys home from Bolivia. Get rough on the user.

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Krauthammer is a National Magazine Award-winning columnist.

Administration acknowledges Nicaraguan drug trafficking

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Reagan administration, in a new report, acknowledges that some Nicaraguan rebels and supporters have engaged in drug trafficking, but insists that evidence is lacking against the chief U.S.-backed Contra group.

"The available evidence points to involvement with drug traffickers by a limited number of persons having various kinds of affiliations with or political sympathies for resistance groups," said the report sent to Congress by the State Department.

Specifically, the report cites U.S. intelligence information as saying "a senior member of Eden Pastora's Sandino Revolutionary Front" in late 1984 agreed to help a Colombian narcotics traf-

ficker ship drugs to the United States in exchange for an airplane, two helicopters and money.

Last December, The Associated Press, quoting U.S. investigators and American volunteers who worked with the rebels, reported that Nicaraguan rebels operating in northern Costa Rica engaged in cocaine trafficking to help finance their war against Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista government.

The AP said the smuggling operations included refueling planes at clandestine rebel airstrips and helping transport cocaine to other Costa Rican Points for shipment to the United States. The AP also cited a U.S. intelligence report that said a Pastora commander used cocaine profits to buy military equipment.

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