

## Opinion &amp; Analysis

Time for  
'war on  
drugs' to  
target users

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

**N**OT LONG ago, the Garda seized 32kg (77lb of heroin) worth €6.5 million, capturing one of Dublin's allegedly most notorious drug traffickers. That's 32kg that won't be injected into anyone's veins, and perhaps a drug dealer taken off the streets for several years. Surely, a major filip for society.

Except it's not; it's a total waste of taxpayers' money. Not a single heroin user will forego his/her fix. Meanwhile, others will step forward to take the captive's place and keep the criminal drug supply chain humming.

That's the fallacy of the utterly fruitless global war on drugs, of which the only spin-off may be a slight rise in drug prices to offset the inconvenience of harassment by the boys in blue, which may marginally deter a few marginal users. The reason for the drug warriors' universal failure is simple: they are all aiming at the wrong target.

Mistakenly, it's drug-peddlers who get attacked and demonised everywhere, from capitalist America to authoritarian Russia to socialist Venezuela to communist Cuba to Islamist Iran. Thoroughly antipathetic to each other, such countries make strange bedfellows when it comes to drugs, doing little to co-operate in their fights against the common enemy.

The secondary mis-targeted target is the drug growers, those wondrously industrious and inventive developing-world farmers in such places as Afghanistan, Columbia, Laos. To feed their families, these hardy men find ever better ways of growing poppies, coca, cannabis, despite the attempts of international drug-busters to ruin their harvests while vainly tempting them to adopt less lucrative careers.

You have to marvel at how stone-age Afghan tillers of the soil, in a desperately poor, war-torn, gun-happy, terrorist-ridden, land-locked, almost infrastructureless country, nevertheless meet over 90 per cent of the world's demand for heroin and other opiates. What other country produces – and exports – 90 per cent of the world's anything?

The growers and pushers are the wrong targets because they're not the source of the world's drug problem. That dubious honour belongs to the customers, who alone create the demand and provide the money that fuels the drugs industry.

Thus the only one way to suppress it is through relentless, merciless pressure on drug users themselves. While they continue buying, no amount of napalming crops or incarcerating traffickers is going to halt production and trade. New farmers and new traffickers will spring up to meet the demand.

Two distinct attacks are needed. Firstly, users need to be hunted down in their thousands and punished, notwithstanding the huge strain on judicial systems. Of course this will become supremely unpopular, because whereas dealers are easily vilified, drug-takers are "victims", "addicts", "prostitutes". Or pillars of society, or celebrities, or just ordinary guys and gals enjoying a night out or a private dinner party.

Yet the criminalisation of thousands, causing uproar as people see the law cart off friends and relations, will undoubtedly cut consumption and thus



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production and trafficking, a feat which no other "war on drugs" has come close to achieving.

The second approach should aim to cut people's desire for drugs in the first place. Certainly, widespread TV advertising about the dangers would help, just as ads about the horrific effects of alcohol-fuelled car accidents reduce drink driving.

But wholesale change in the drug-taking culture will not happen without targeting people so young their world-views are only forming. As already happens over things like global warming, nature conservation and bad driving, that means starting anti-drugs education at primary school, if not kindergarten. And keeping it going, relentlessly, throughout children's education, so that when they hit adulthood, drug-taking seems as ridiculous as driving without a seat belt or leaving all the lights on.

The effectiveness, whether for good or ill, of such social brainwashing of the very young and upwards is well proven. Examples abound.

Indoctrinating generations of Ireland's kids in the Catholic catechism maintained this country as almost a theocratic state until only a couple of decades ago. Instilling a huge sense of knowledge and pride in one's nation, history and – indeed – race, helped to create and fuel countless empires over the centuries, for better or for worse.

Or, witness the tribal loyalties and hatreds, inculcated from the cradle, leading to conflicts such as the 1994 Rwandan genocide, Northern Ireland's 30-year war, the current violence in Kenya pitting Kikuyu against Luo. To this day, innumerable madrassas across the world teach Muslim children the alleged wickedness of Jews and the virtues of suicide-homicide. So whole generations are now growing up with such notions hard-wired into their brains, and hot for jihad.

Brainwashing kids with anti-drug ideas will certainly cut the number of adults with a yen to snort or inject. But it is unglamorous, difficult to implement, pretty boring and will take 20 years to yield results. Compared to the fun of rooting out dealers and poisoning poppy fields, it provides few kudos for politicians and law-enforcers.

Yet no battle against drugs can ever be ultimately successful until it confronts the true culprits, ie those who ingest the stuff, both today's consumers (adults) and tomorrow's (children). For both groups of citizens, the solution is the same: to conquer and bend that most powerful of mankind's attributes – the mind. This means declaring drug-war on both users and kids. Or simply legalising the wretched chemicals.

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## Opinion &amp; Analysis

Sports fans  
have duty to  
boycott the  
Olympics

**I** SHOULDN'T criticise the Chinese leadership just as it is showing, perhaps for the first time, concern for its citizens following that dreadful earthquake. But I will.

The protests that dogged the progress of the Olympic flame on its world tour put China into the headlines everywhere. It's uncomfortably familiar with unfavourable press treatment in the West, largely because when faced with dissent, the approach of its illegitimate, undemocratic politburo – and of that body's close friends – is simply to kill a lot of awkward people and bystanders. Sufficient death and fear usually cause the trouble to subside.

For instance, last October, China was berated for looking on benignly, while in the best traditions of Tiananmen Square in 1989, the undemocratic military junta that illegitimately rules Burma arrested, suppressed, tortured, killed and secretly cremated thousands of Burmese protesting against fuel increases. The junta's criminal obstructionism over Cyclone Nargis is likewise being largely ignored. The Chinese politburo's other felonies include its support of Omar al-Bashir's undemocratic, illegitimate regime in Sudan, by developing and buying its oil, selling it guns and investing \$15 billion. This has enabled that regime, through its Janjaweed militia, to continue ethnically cleansing Darfur of its non-Arab Sudanese, apparently to make way for further oil exploration by the Chinese and others.

Or there is the systematic extraction and sale of body organs from live Falun Gong practitioners (and their concomitant homicide), in pursuit of the lucrative transplant tourism business. The Red Army runs the jails where Falun Gong prisoners undergo detailed medical examinations and blood tests as soon as they are captured, and the hospitals that lure foreign patients with the promise of fresh, compatible organs at keen prices.

And of course there are its crimes in Tibet. These are part of a continuing pattern that began when Mao Tse-Tung sent in the Red Army in 1950/51 to steal – or as he would have it, "liberate" – Tibet from, well, the Tibetans. Having taken control, for the past five decades the politburo has systematically used military might and terror to suppress Tibetan dissent, chase away or execute unco-operative citizens and leaders and eradicate all vestiges of Tibetan identity, culture, language and holy and historic sites – the Dalai Lama calls this "cultural genocide".

Simultaneously, it has fostered massive immigration of ethnic Han and other Chinese settlers to dilute the Tibetan population. To further promote this nefarious cause, the politburo recently opened a \$4 billion, thousand-kilometre railway from Beijing to the Tibetan capital of Lhasa. This outstanding engineering feat is uneconomic and has nothing to do with trade or tourism, but everything to do with facilitating colonisation, and if needed, rushing in troops and police. Immigration has turned Tibetans into a besieged, discriminated against minority in their own country.

So perhaps the surprise is not



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Empty stadiums may force the Chinese politburo to reconsider its oppressive behaviour

that Tibetans sometimes rise up in anguish, but that they do it so rarely. Faced with the politburo's brutal crackdowns, I don't suppose I would stand up either. Human rights will not improve much until there is a regime change in China. This may happen over time through evolution (the current politburo is undoubtedly less brutal and far more business-like than Mao).

However, it can only be triggered in the short term through foreign invasion, widespread internal uprisings by hundreds of millions of Chinese citizens, or if the seven-million strong armed forces decide to act against their masters. But none of these options look remotely plausible. So what can ordinary people do to express their disapproval of the Chinese leaders' behaviour in a manner that might encourage better conduct? Not much.

But not nothing. Once the flame procession is over, the Beijing Olympics will offer a unique opportunity to apply severe pressure, though not through a conventional boycott by participating states. Those of Moscow (1980) and Los Angeles (1984) punished athletes, yet had no influence on the offending countries – the USSR for invading Afghanistan and the USA for revenge. These games were still great successes.

There is another, more democratic way. The games should go ahead as planned; no athlete should be expected to stand down. Instead, the spectators should do the boycotting, in their droves.

From the politburo's perspective, nothing could be worse than TV pictures beamed across the world of empty stadiums whilst the contests proceed, with everyone knowing why. Such a boycott would be the ultimate, unthinkable, public humiliation for the Chinese leadership, where face is such an important part of national culture, history and psyche. And it would be grimmer by the knowledge that no government had done it, just free people with honourable principles. If the Chinese become convinced that a popular boycott of the Olympics is in danger of happening, they will move heaven and earth to prevent it.

Otherwise, they will continue to support other dictators in Burma and Sudan, suppressing Tibetans and their culture and harvesting transplant organs from Falun Gong prisoners. Every Olympic spectator has a choice. I have cancelled my plans to attend.

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## Opinion & Analysis

# Adult needs trump rights of children in AHR debate

**L**AST WEEK on the radio, Pat Kenny interviewed a 35-year-old Englishwoman, Joanna Rose, who was born as the result of an artificial conception by her mother, who used an anonymous sperm donor.

Sponsored by the Iona Institute, Ms Rose is the first such person to speak publicly in Ireland about her situation, and her central message is that the offspring of Assisted Human Reproduction (AHR) are never consulted – or indeed rarely even considered – in the debate over use of AHR. She believes this – and AHR itself – is deeply wrong.

Without self-pity, she raised jolting considerations that would rarely cross the mind of anyone fortunate to have been naturally conceived and lovingly raised by his/her biological parents.

She believes her biological father was a serial donor, and as a result she reckons she could have up to 300 half-siblings. Besides being intensely curious about this extended family, she worries that she may unbeknownst end up falling in love with a brother.

She is ignorant of any genetic medical issues that she might have inherited from her father. Her father does not appear on her birth certificate; her mother cannot bring herself to discuss the matter. When she tries to trace her father through the AHR agencies she is told lies – first that the records have been destroyed in an office fire, then in an office flooding, then accidentally dumped in a skip.

Hypocrisy too. Adults who seek out AHR want a baby that is as genetically close to them as possible. Ideally the couple will use their own sperm and eggs, implanted in a surrogate if necessary. Failing that, one donor will be used, and only failing that will two donors be sought. Single people and gays wanting children will also seek out as much genetic kinship as possible, and in all cases consanguinity will gladden the hearts of family members (grandparents, siblings, etc).

Yet throughout, there is blithe insouciance about the importance of kinship for the baby, whose future need – a fundamental human urge and right – to know its biological family is rarely even considered. Her experience, and



A technology created to help childless married couples is now being promoted as a money-spinning venture

that of other similar offspring, is that going public about her origins and unhappiness is akin to a gay person coming out of the closet – a life-changing event that is difficult, embarrassing and makes others uncomfortable.

Ms Rose sees herself and her colleagues as being an unwitting, unwilling central part of a social experiment, solely for the gratification of adult desires.

AHR can lead to extraordinary family situations. Consider a mum with three AHR children by different donors, and maybe a husband. Perhaps she separates from him and takes up with another man. Before long the family can have five different dads, which can lead to all kinds of confusion among the children.



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Babies born via Assisted Human Reproduction are the unwitting and unwilling central participants in a social experiment solely for the gratification of adult desires

Donors themselves are often having to confront issues. Sometimes it is simply remorse or curiosity about the children they have parented, of whom they know nothing. But it can be more direct. A family man may be contacted by an adult child resulting from a donation made when a student, creating immediate tensions. Possible inheritance issues can likewise create unwelcome pressures, exacerbated by worry that another 50 such offspring could suddenly emerge.

It is extraordinary and wrong that although women are counselled on such issues before donating, men are not. For men it is seen as akin to a blood donation. Indeed, in Britain, a government-backed pro-donation website says exactly this.

AHR research is centred almost entirely on AHR technology, AHR medicine, and AHR parents, and is usually funded by AHR companies. Almost never are AHR offspring included. The inevitable result is findings that are always skewed in favour of AHR, which just happens to have become a very lucrative business.

A technology originally created to help childless married couples is now being promoted as a money-spinning venture to unmarrieds, singles, gays and lesbians. The businesses are aided and abetted by governments, especially in the English-speaking world (though not Ireland). Extraordinarily, there appears to be more money in fertility treatment than in plastic surgery.

Even AHR children of married parents can experience emotional difficulties, sometimes linking personal problems with their conception. The link may be false but it is real to the person concerned: a drug addict connects his addiction to the thought that he was conceived using a syringe; or bulimia is blamed on the fact that she began life as sperm in a spoon.

Ms Rose's bottom line is that there are no circumstances that justify the conception of a child via AHR. Its sole purpose is to satisfy the wants of adults while disregarding the needs of the resultant children. With the possible exception of married couples, it is hard to disagree.

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## Opinion &amp; Analysis

# West must intervene to liberate Zimbabwe

**WE** HAVE all been shocked and horrified by the recent goings on in Zimbabwe. In his desperation to cling to power at all costs during the "election" process of the past few months, its despot Robert Mugabe has starved, beaten and killed Zimbabwean citizens for the affront of not supporting him. The run-off "election" alone saw a further hundred people murdered, thousands beaten and tens of thousands evicted from their homes.

And the violence continues, although Mugabe has now "won" an umpteenth term as president. He is clearly bent on punishing and destroying anyone with the temerity to vote or speak against him. Of course, the man has form.

Within a few years of coming to power in a popular vote, Mugabe, a Shona, sent in his personal, North Korean-trained military hit squad to perpetrate widespread massacres in Matabeland, stronghold of his political opponent Joshua Nkomo. Some 20,000 died from the rival Ndebele tribe (which, descended from proud Zulus, historically regarded Shonas solely as a source of slaves, women and cattle).

It was in the 2000 election, which Morgan Tsvangirai's MDC party lost by only four seats, that Mugabe first learnt, to his shock, he was no longer adored by his people. In response, he began violently expropriating white-owned farms to reward his cronies, and as a direct result precipitated the economy's disastrous collapse.

For the 2002 presidential election, he deployed widespread violence and vote rigging against the opposition and achieved a "seriously flawed" if comfortable victory as his reward.

Similar tactics for the 2005 parliamentary election ensured a substantial triumph over the MDC by 37 seats.

His "Drive out the Filth" campaign followed where, by bulldozing the shanty towns and markets of the poorest people in

## Travel bans and piffling sanctions have been applied, all to no effect

Harare and other towns, he softened up urban opposition by rendering a million mortals homeless and without income.

Throughout all this criminal mayhem, there have been continual calls from the international community for Mugabe to moderate his behaviour and observe democratic norms. Travel bans and similar piffling sanctions have been applied, all to no effect. And in the past few weeks, he has happily journeyed, unmolested, to Rome and Egypt for conferences.

We are supposed to be encouraged because the UN Security Council for the first time "discussed" the latest "election" (even if China and Russia exercised vetoes), Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu condemned it, and even the 53-strong African Union (31 of them non-democracies) mumbled some vaguely critical words. Politicians, media and NGOs in the West continue to bleat about the need for sanctions, talks, negotiations and compromises.



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### Words and sanctions have failed – military action is needed to end Mugabe's regime

Words and mild slaps have been going on for years. If they were ever going to work, they would have done so by now, at least to some extent, but they haven't. Mugabe has made it abundantly clear that he will never leave office, that "only God" can remove him. And this is wise because his lifestyle if not life will be in immediate danger the moment he steps down. In 2002, Ian Smith, the country's last white ruler, laid down a challenge: "If Mugabe and I walk together into a black township, only one of us will come out alive. I'm ready to put that to the test right now. He's not."

Only direct military action – not words, not sanctions – will remove him and only the West has the military capability. It won't be difficult (though many will doubtless scream "illegal war").

In 2000, British prime minister Tony Blair deployed a crack task force to Sierra Leone, which in just six weeks defeated rebel forces who had been waging civil war for nine years. A few months later, he sent in a handful of SAS and SBS commandos who rescued a dozen military hostages from a different group of rebels deep in Sierra Leone. These decisive actions were instrumental in turning the country into one of the African Union's 22 democracies.

At the first sight of professional soldiery, you can be sure the Zimbabwe army and police, who have no idea how to deal with anyone who isn't an unarmed civilian, will discard their weapons and uniforms and simply melt away, much as Gen Mengistu's powerful, 400,000-strong army in Ethiopia did when confronted with rag-tag opposition in 1991.

In the name of enforcing the election results and without anyone's permission, the objective should be to capture or kill Mugabe and his senior colleagues. Survivors should be delivered for trial for crimes against humanity at the international criminal court in the Hague.

Having handed the administration to Morgan Tsvangirai, whom no one but the Mugabe clique doubts won last March's election, the invading force should then rapidly withdraw. This would allow the international community to provide the support it has already promised to help rebuild the shattered country.

In Mugabe's Zimbabwe, words kill, because by achieving nothing, they permit and encourage him to continue his murderous rampage. Thus those who forswear military action should just remain silent, for they are, however, unwittingly on the side of Robert Mugabe. I am not.

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## Obama is a triumph of style over substance

**T**HE MORE I read about and watch Barack Obama, the more I am reminded of Saint Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, 13:1: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am but an empty gong or a clashing cymbal."

With his soaring rhetoric, Obama speaks with "the tongues of men and of angels", but it is unfair to suggest he lacks love. He clearly loves his family and has many friends. And it is, after all, not he but his wife who has trouble with the concept of loving America. But the talk of "an empty gong or a clashing cymbal" strikes a chord, so to speak.

Even after more than a year of vigorous campaigning, it is impossible to know what he would actually do if elected. Not that he hasn't told us, he has told us plenty, but he keeps telling us different, contradictory stuff. So what are people supposed to believe? Does he even know himself what he believes?

Is he for unconditional talks with Iran, anywhere, anytime, or not? Does he want to pull out of Iraq regardless of what happens, or does it depend on circumstances? Is he for Nafta (North American Free Trade Agreement) or against it, or indeed free trade in general? Does he love business or hate it? Is Jerusalem to be undivided or separated? Does he respect the white grandma who raised him or despise her as a racist?

Over the long campaigning months, his uplifting speeches and (rarer) debates and interviews have at different times adopted both sides of these questions, and many others, in what almost amounts to Orwellian doublespeak.

His big nomination speech during the Democratic Convention didn't add much light, and for much the same reason.

For example, how long will it be before he "clarifies" what he means by, say, his trumpeted tax cuts for 95 per cent of working families, or whether ending US dependence on Middle Eastern oil in 10 years means making the current two and a half million

**A handsome but empty shell which makes a pleasing noise ...**

daily imported barrels vanish?

Let's see whether other aspects of his life shed any light. Views about people are often formed by what they have achieved in their lives. But Obama's career before this campaign has thrown up no accomplishments of note, other than two autobiographical books that are earning him millions of dollars, though this seems to be more because of his rock-star status than their content.

He began his working life as something called a "community worker", but no one ever explains what that means, and if he had left a legacy, you can be sure we would have been told about it. He then lectured on law at the University of Chicago Law School, but published not a single



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The US presidential candidate's rhetoric is intoxicating – but what would he do if elected?

piece of academic work – unusual for someone termed a professor.

He was elected a two-term senator in Illinois with another term in the federal Senate, but without being the primary sponsor of any legislation of significance, and in the latter forum, his voting record last year placed him as the 100th most left-wing senator out of 100.

So you certainly can't evaluate him by his achievements. Is he therefore "but an empty gong?" How about the people he mixes with, then? They say you can judge a man by the company he keeps. But some of Obama's friends look decidedly odd.

There are the America-hating, toxic pastors Jeremiah "God damn America" Wright and Michael "Hillary mocker" Pfleger; the unrepentant "weather underground" terrorist leaders Bernardine Dohrn and her husband Bill Ayers – about whom the Obama campaign is trying to suppress a YouTube video reminding us that he tried to blow up the Capitol in 1971, and a fascinating interview with Stanley Kurtz, a Hoover Institute Fellow, about the murky Obama/Ayers relationship.

Then there is that pair of Obama fundraisers – Rashid Khalidi, an Israel-hating supporter of Palestinian terror, and property developer and convicted fraudster Tony Rezko.

These are the kind of people he likes to hang out with and who have helped him in his career and life to date, which includes bolstering his campaign. So what does that tell us about the future judgment, sympathies and behaviour of a President Obama?

Anyone can make a mistake by choosing a friend who turns out to be a knave. But six of them? Then, contrast this motley, awkward and embarrassing coterie of buddies with his intoxicating speeches. Does this make him a "clashing cymbal"?

Extraordinary oratory; flip-flopping policies; accomplishment-free; dodgy company. That to me is Obama. A handsome but empty shell which makes a pleasing noise, along the lines described by Saint Paul.

Of course, it's too early to say with conviction whether Sarah Palin is any different, though her fellow Alaskan, Mary Mullen in Galway, writing in this newspaper the other day, clearly thinks she's not.

But you be the judge. In fact here's a better idea. Let the American people be the judge this November.

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