



## Ending the War on Drugs: A Solution for America

**Dirk Chase Eldredge**

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Ending the War on Drugs is a timely book since illegal drug use in America is currently a political hot potato. However, it is not a new issue. Eldredge, an admitted “white, conservative Republican,” sheds light on the complex problem and proposes tightly controlled government distribution of drugs. If his ideas and thesis have a strong political bias, his treatment of issues is nevertheless intelligent and fair.

The anecdotes, statistics and selected comment from various experts are convincing. Regardless of the reader’s political inclinations, he will find surprising facts, insights, and situations that arouse his interest and opinions. Eighty percent of drug deaths, for example, result from the illegality of drugs, not from the drugs themselves. And this: heroin addicts are addicted to needles, favoring injection as opposed to snorting, eating, or smoking the drug.

Apt detail—from the world of the user, the pusher, the smuggler, police, or the recreational user—enlivens the statistics and brings immediacy to problems.

Eldredge seeks to separate myth from fact, and he attempts to cover tangential issues such as societal harm and race relations (Blacks tend to see the war on drugs as racist.) While he cannot do so comprehensively in a rather small book, the issues are at least brought before the reader to consider.

His point seems to be that the present war on drugs is actually a source of societal evils and that change and “leadership must come from the President and the Congress.” While government distribution of drugs might not solve all the problems, Eldredge proposes that, as the lesser of two evils, it would be “a solution for America.”

SALLY KETCHUM (September / October 1998)

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