

I. THE CONTEXT OF THIS WAR

- The United States has used drug laws to selectively target specific communities for more than a century
- The prison population began to really grow in the 1970s
- From 1969 to 1974, Richard Nixon was the president of the United States
- In 1971, he declared a “war on drugs” and justified it with speeches about being “tough on crime.”
- The government offered treatment to any drug addict that needed and wanted it



NIXON, TOUGH ON CRIME POLICIES

II. THE WAR ON DRUGS WITH THE AIM OF REDUCING THE ILLEGAL DRUG TRADE IN THE US

- The war on drugs is the policy of a global campaign, led by the United States federal government, of drug prohibition, military aid, and military intervention
- It includes a set of drug policies that are intended to discourage the production, distribution, and consumption of psychoactive illegal
- In 1971, Nixon declared drug abuse as the "public enemy number one".

III. THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS WAR

A. The consequences at the time

- Disproportionate arrest, conviction, and sentencing rates for drug offenses have devastated communities of color in America.
- John Ehrlichman admitted that the war on drugs was designed to have this impact on the Black community. They would arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them on the evening news.

B. The consequences nowadays

- Simply put, the U.S. incarcerates more people than any nation in the world and is also the leader in the prison population rate.
- America’s approach to punishment often lacks a public safety reasoning, disproportionately affects minorities, and inflicts very harsh sentences.

IV. AN EVOLUTION TOWARDS A BETTER PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM AND LESS RACE DISPARITIES

- Prison populations have declined by about 10 percent. Racial disparities in the prison population have also fallen.
- A growing number of states are decriminalizing cannabis
- Democratic lawmakers introduced the Drug Policy Reform Act, which would decriminalize all drugs and invest in health-centered measures to take on drug addiction