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HEADLINE: JOHN MCLAUGHLIN'S "ONE ON ONE"  
WITH GUEST: GENERAL BARRY MCCAFFREY,  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY  
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BODY:

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: The drug war: Are we winning?

New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson this week called for the legalization of drugs, starting with marijuana, and if that legalization works, extending it to cocaine and heroin. To justify this, Governor Johnson cited the drug war's \$19 billion cumulative price tag, spent mostly for the interdiction, the prosecution, and the incarceration of offenders. The results, he says, overcrowded prisons, no reduction in supply.

GEN. MCCAFFREY: (From videotape.) I think this is harmful, it's unwise, and I personally think the governor ought to be ashamed of himself.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: The nation's drug czar, General Barry McCaffrey, returned fire, pointing out that overall youth drug use declined 13 percent in the last year, due in large part to a multi-billion-dollar advertising campaign. Even more dramatically, cocaine use is down 70 percent since the highs of the mid-'80s.

Is the tide really turning in the war on drugs, or is it time to go Governor Johnson's way and legalize? We'll ask the Clinton administration's field general in the war on drugs, Barry McCaffrey.

ANNOUNCER: From Washington, D.C., John McLaughlin's "One on One," an unrehearsed, probing, inside exchange with and about the people making the news. Sponsored by the Archer Daniels Midland Company -- ADM, supermarket to the world -- and by Chase: The right relationship is everything. Here's the host, John McLaughlin.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: General McCaffrey, Governor Johnson, Gary Johnson of New Mexico, was here in Washington this week, and he said, "For the amount of money we're putting into the war on drugs, I suggest it's an absolute failure. Make drugs a controlled substance, like alcohol. Legalize it. Regulate it. Tax it. If you legalize it, we might actually have a healthier society." Are you taken aback by hearing him say that?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: We were dismayed. You know, it's one thing for people to exercise free speech. It's another thing for a public servant, particularly a governor who has vetoed \$2.6 million in drug treatment dollars during his five years in office, to make such a foolish comment.

Look, there's 4 million of us as Americans who are chronically addicted to drugs. Fortunately, the good news is, drug treatment works, particularly when you combine it with the criminal justice system. So there is a way out.

I went to one of the principal drug treatment centers in Albuquerque --

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: New Mexico.

GEN. MCCAFFREY: New Mexico.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: The governor's state.

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Exactly. You know, these brilliant men and women who have more than 700 chronically addicted Americans in treatment saving their lives. And that's really where we need to go.

The other thing I noted was in his state now a lot of the kids are referring to him as "Governor Puff Daddy Johnson." I think the message to adolescents, which is really what we're concerned about, couldn't be more dangerous.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: How much influence is he having?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, fortunately, very little compared to parents and pediatricians and ministers and coaches and the serious people that really create youth attitudes. Having said that, it's a conflicting message and it seems to me it needs to be repudiated by responsible people in the state.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: This really is an extraordinary event when a governor of one of our states calls for the legalization of drugs.

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Yeah.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: It's extraordinary. When that happens, does it signal to you in any respect that the country is losing patience with the federal war on drugs?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, I tried to suggest that we ought to think in terms of a metaphor of a cancer affecting American communities. I think the metaphor "war on drugs" gets us in trouble. It is clear that if we look back over the last 15 years, drug use in America is down by 50 percent; cocaine use is down by 70 percent. Donna Shalala and I just released last year's stats on youth drug-use rates are down by 13 percent. So there are some indications that this huge effort is beginning to bite in, is beginning to pay off.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: I've been doing this show for over 15 years, and I worked for Nixon, and Nixon started the war on drugs. So we're talking about the early '70s.

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Sure.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: The war on drugs has been in existence for 30 years, but the victory never seems to come. I've heard, you know, drug czars give statistics that seem to indicate that there is progress being made, but the light at the end of the tunnel seems still very far away.

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Sure. Yeah. Well, you know, one of the reasons the metaphor gets us in trouble, we've had a war on ignorance for 200 years, but we never expect to declare final victory. Every year new crops of young people show up. And in our case, on the drug issue, it's middle-school children; our American kids leave the sixth grade, this wonderful DARE program, and they enter middle school years, they start huffing inhalants, smoking marijuana. And just a surprising stat; more eighth-graders use heroin in today's America than 12th-graders. That's where they get in trouble.

But most of them don't use drugs. And the reason they don't are community coalitions and parents and health professionals. That's where this war is being fought.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Has Johnson proposed a referendum to legalize or decriminalize drugs for his state?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: No, he really hasn't. Another part of this problem is -- look, a lot of money, federal dollars, goes to the state of New Mexico. And what's lacking is an integration, a horizontal pulling together, of prevention/treatment law enforcement to have some kind of sensible integrated campaign. That's what the governors have to do; the mayors, the county executives. This struggle isn't won in Washington; it's won in communities across America.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Do you think the states should have the option to legalize or decriminalize drugs?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: No, of course not. We have got the Controlled Substance Act. When it comes to medical drugs, now, that's a simple one. The National Institutes of Health, the Food and drug Administration, set national standards based on controlled clinical trials.

But we do have federal legislation on these illegal drugs, and there is no real disagreement with them in the American people.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: do you know that in Washington, D.C., a referendum was held?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Sure.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: And about 70 percent of the people recommended decriminalizing marijuana --

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well --

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: -- for medical use.

GEN. MCCAFFREY: -- for medical use, yeah.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Now, you took a disapproving view of that referendum?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Yeah. Yeah.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Correct? And also, the United States Congress tried to bottle it up, conceal it until it was detected and discovered by the press. Correct?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Mm-hmm. (In agreement.)

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: So what is the story on that? Are you embarrassed by it?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, I think we have done a very poor job explaining to the American people -- when I say "we," I mean the "medical and scientific community" because that's where this question ought to get decided. We haven't adequately expressed the viewpoint that the door is permanently open to any drug, regardless of what it is, if it actually benefits patients. But that's what (to) decide it is doctors and scientists, not political referendum.

I might also add, a few years ago, many of the states passed laws allowing laetrile to be used for cancer therapy. Laetrile didn't work either.

I don't think this is really a huge issue, but it ought to be to doctors and scientists.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Do you put marijuana and its medicinal potential -- medicine benefit in the same class with laetrile, which is derived from horse urine?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, I'd also say that we ought to protect our process. The process to decide about medicine belongs in the hands of the National Institute of Health, not a referendum.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: If a doctor says to you, "I think my patient could benefit by the medicinal use of marijuana," what would you say to the doctor?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, I wouldn't.

I'd tell him to consult with the surgeon general, to find out the viewpoint of the American Society of Cancer or the American Oncological Society. And none of them have supported medicinal marijuana.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: If it lessens the cancer victim's pain, what is the reasonable social objection to that?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: There couldn't be one. If it was needed -- if smoked pot, if a blunt stuck in your face was needed for the management of prostate cancer pain, it ought to be provided. But that decision ought to be made, again, by physicians, not a political process.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: So you're not, in theory, against legalizing marijuana for medicinal purposes in individual cases, as prescribed by competent medical authorities?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Sure.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Is that a fair statement?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: And indeed there are 30-some-odd cannabinoids in this product, one of which, THC, is already available in pharmacies, with a doctor's prescription, called Marinol. And there may be other cannabinoids, presumably, that have modest symptom-management capability.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Do you think that Cato, which is the libertarian institute in town, which does some fine research work, was irresponsible in giving a platform to Governor Johnson to advocate drug legalization?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: No, I think it's a legitimate topic to debate in a free society. I mean, folks ought to be able to step up to the plate and decide do they want their families, their employees, their communities to have more available and socially tolerated a drugged, dazed environment. So that's a legitimate political issue.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Getting back to the legalization question here in D.C., the referendum showed that a consensus of the people here -- 70 percent is an easy and full consensus --

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Mm-hmm. MR. MCLAUGHLIN: -- favored the legalization of marijuana for medicinal purposes --

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Right.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: -- right?

You say it is okay, it is legal for a doctor, as I described it earlier, to prescribe in the instances of real medical need. What's the difference between that and the position of the referendum? Why do you balk at the referendum and not balk at a doctor prescribing under appropriate circumstances?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, I think we ought to keep medicines under the federal law that if they're approved by the FDA, physicians can prescribe them -- write a prescription, go to a pharmacy. That's what I --

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Is that formulated into federal law now as you just stated it?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Sure.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: It is in federal law?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Sure. Yeah. In other words, a doctor who prescribes a non-legal medication, a Controlled Substance Act medication -- and by the way, cocaine products are legal medicines, and methamphetamines have valid medical requirements.

So a doctor can write a prescription, use anesthesia for eye surgery with cocaine --

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Well, the bottom line is that a referendum is superfluous because we've already covered the instances of medical need through existing law --

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Yes.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: -- correct?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Right.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Do you think you've made that clear to the American people?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Obviously not. And indeed, you know -- an analogy, if you'll permit, is if

we had local referendums around the Los Angeles airfield on airfield control procedures, obviously it would be a problem, because we have FAA regulations that set common standards across the nation. We need to leave questions about medicine in the hands of scientists and doctors. This is not a political issue.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: And you know of no doctors who have been prosecuted for prescribing marijuana for the relief of pain?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, I used to say that. But basically, if I was a physician, why would you do that when there are serious products that actually can handle pain if the physician is trained and aware of the problem?

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: You mean you don't need marijuana and it's not --

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Oh, no.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: -- and you don't think it's the best available pharmaceutical to handle pain?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, the American Academy of Science says there might be modest symptom-management capability for -- perhaps for some part of the population, with further research. But this is not -- so far, there's no evidence to indicate that smoked pot is valid. In fact, the study says it's harmful to the chronically ill, and pregnant women. That was also in the study.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: We'll be right back.

(Announcements.)

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Governor Jesse Ventura made clear his position on drugs in a couple of quotes from this piece from a magazine. Quote: "I have smoked a joint, and there's nothing wrong with that. That's one of the biggest atrocities going on right now -- marijuana. I have done far" -- marijuana, period, I guess. "I have done far stupider things on alcohol. Give someone a Hendrix tape and a joint, and stick him in the corner, and he's happy."

What do you think of that comment?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, I read the same interview, and you know, obviously, just from reading the interview, this is a very entertaining and clever person, but he's got a foolish mouth.

And what I -- we have argued, people like Donna Shalala and I, and Dick Riley, the Education secretary, is that the most harmful drug in America is a 12-year-old smoking pot on weekends. We find that it's gateway drug-taking behavior sets up young people for later on in life having compulsive drug-use habits. So we're against children using pot, inhalants, and abusing alcohol, and we want the governor to share our viewpoint.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Do you think that he is a good role model --

GEN. MCCAFFREY: No.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: -- for American youth?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: No. I think this is unsettling; I don't understand why he is doing this. Adult behavior is quite different. And he needs to, when he speaks in public, understand that young people are listening to what he is saying.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Well clearly, it was not off the cuff because the interviewer returned to it later in the interview, and he said, "What about drug crimes?"

And Ventura said: That's consensual crime. People who commit consensual crimes should not go to jail. We shouldn't even prosecute them. That's crime against yourself. Drugs and prostitution; those should not be imprisoning crimes. The government has much more important things to do.

So this is a conviction with him.

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Yeah, sure. Well, you know --

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: And we have another governor who feels this way about drugs.

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Yeah. Yeah.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: You don't think you are losing the mainstream, do you?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, it's certainly not what the polls are telling us. The American people don't share that viewpoint.

Look, if you go to the drug treatment centers and see the people I am dealing with -- and by the way, this is not a minority problem. This isn't city people, poor people. This is widespread, 4 million Americans who are chronically abusing illegal drugs. They are a mess. They are sick: They're either with Hepatitis C, they're HIV-positive, they're unemployed. They are alienated from their family. It's a tremendous shame. Fortunately, there is something we can do about it called drug treatment.

We have got the drug-court system going on. Four years ago, there were a dozen courts; today, there are more than 600. Janet Reno and I have been supporting that proposition.

So we don't believe in locking up the chronically addicted for their drug abuse problem. But we do think you need the full measure of the law, or otherwise drug treatment programs don't work.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Your office has spent a lot of money on television advertising, public-service announcements aimed at young people. They are provocative ads. We have got one of them in house; we'd like to show it now.

(Public-service announcement is shown.)

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: What's been the public response to those ads, those public service announcements?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Real good. Jim Burke, Partnership for a Drug-Free America, about 30 professionals, gets a lot of this work done for free by about 200 advertising agencies, and we pay for access. It's going to be a five-year, billion-dollar campaign. We just started the final phase. We're in 11 languages. We've got 102 different media market strategies, so it sounds different if you're in Hawaii or Newark, New Jersey or Miami, Florida. But they're affecting youth attitudes, they're reaching the target population. These ads are -- have to go through a behavioral science expert panel to make sure they're scientifically valid, the message that's in them. And they're starting to bite into youth attitudes, we think.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Black and white photography, and a young lady actress who is clearly peer-type recognizable by her contemporaries; right?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Half the ads are targeted at adolescents, and the primary group we're talking to are middle school children, but also their moms and also the leadership of the Boys and Girls Clubs, the YMCA Youth programs, adult mentors. And our target was four times a week; we're actually achieving seven times a week contact with the age group. We think they're spectacular.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Are you getting any help from the Clinton administration with regard to the funding?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Oh, gosh, yeah.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Is it from the White House or is it from the Congress?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, for four years -- in four years we've gone from \$13.5 billion to \$17.8 billion. We've gone up 55 percent on prevention and education, and 26 percent on drug treatment.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: What do you think of Elizabeth Dole making this comment this week: "The White House has not led a war on drugs. It's not that they surrendered, they just didn't show up. This year the Clinton administration has cut \$400 million in funds critical to drug interdiction, stopping the flow of drugs into this country. And they've neglected to ask for a single additional Border Control agent." Uttered on October the 7th. What do you say to Elizabeth Dole?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, she's a pretty admirable public service, so I need to listen closely to her.

And having said that, we've got a drug interdiction budget that's pretty robust. We've taken the Border Patrol from 3,000 people to 7,000 people and we're en route to a higher manning level, around 10,000. So a lot is going on.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: So you disagree with her?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, I think probably she needs an update from me on where we are.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: You think she would benefit by that?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Yeah. I think you have to really -- you have to see what we're doing in multinational cooperation to understand the issue.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: So you think it's question of simple instruction, is that it?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, I think she's got a concern, like many people do, on cooperation with Mexico, but the way we're trying to get at it is partnership, not confrontation.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Is this politics, or is this data?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, it may be a bit of both, and it's the season for both.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: We'll be right back.

(Announcements.)

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Is Mexico in danger of imitating Colombia and becoming a narcoterrorist state? Will the United States then be in danger? We'll answer that question in a moment, but first, here is the profile of our distinguished guest.

Born: Taunton, Massachusetts, 56 years of age. Wife, Jill. Three children. U.S. Military Academy, West Point, B.S.; American University, M.A., civil government. U.S. Army, second lieutenant advancing to major general over a 32-year career. Vietnam War, co-commander, 1st Cavalry Division; two combat tours of duty. NATO, Military Committee, Brussels, deputy U.S. military representative, one year. Persian Gulf War, Saudi Arabia, commander, 24th Mechanized Infantry, seven months. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Pentagon, assistant to Chairman Colin Powell, one year. Director of Strategic Policy, one year. U.S. Army, southern command, Panama, commander-in-chief, two years. Retiring February, 1996. Clinton administration, Office of National Drug Control Policy, Director, three and a half years and currently.

Awards: Three Purple Hearts, two Silver Stars for heroism, Bronze Star for valor.

Barry Richard McCaffrey.

General, is Mexico another Colombia?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: No, it's quite different. Colombia is in enormous peril; 25,000 armed people in the field, the FARC, the ELN, paramilitary. They've got helicopters, planes, automatic weapons, and huge amounts of money.

Mexico is fundamentally threatened. But fortunately, we have got a senior leadership that sees it as its principal national security threat. And we have got decent partnership with them.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Early in your tenure, you had an experience, an episode involving

Mexico, the visit of your Mexican counterpart, like yourself, a military man whom you permitted to have highly detailed briefings on U.S. drug intelligence and sources in Mexico. Is that a fair statement?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Yeah. I have a gag reflex every time I hear the poor man's name. He is now doing 15 years in prison in a Mexican prison, apprehended and convicted by Mexican authorities.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Because he was on the payroll of a Mexican cartel?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: He was one of the most effective drug-fighters in Mexico. Unfortunately, it was against two major drug gangs and paid for by the third, a real embarrassing failure of U.S. intelligence.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: How did that experience affect you personally? I mean by that, do you tend now, as you deal with your counterparts, on their counterparts from other nations, to be cautious and to be a little bit suspicious? Is your radar working all the time, because you don't know whether you have another one of these Mexican chaps on your hands?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, I think what all of us feel is it's not what they say to us; it's what they do that counts. And so, where we deal with people in the international arena, we are really focusing on U.S. national interests and who is making a play that's positive for international drug control.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Were you able to alert the intelligence sources in Mexico; after you discovered the nature of this Mexican drug-cartel contact whom you thought was clean, were you able to alert the intelligence sources to get them out of harm's way?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, of course, he was the chief of their drug police; I mean, it wasn't exactly -- there were no secrets he didn't have access to as the commander of their effort. So he was in there not very long, I think about a month, before they sorted this out and put him under arrest.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Let's talk about overseas, a couple of areas. One is Albania.

The Europeans today are extremely upset because the United States is tilting towards letting Kosovo become independent. And that means, of course, a monoethnic state because the Albanians are either killing or driving out the Serbs or the Serbs are fleeing because they anticipate that. And the Romanians are going, the Gypsies are being killed, so it will be all Albanian.

And the Europeans feel that the Albanian Mafia, notably the KLA, very much involved in drug-dealing, will spread its tentacles through Europe, as it has already to some extent done. What is your thinking on that?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, in October, we'll have a European Union Drug Policy Conference, and we'll talk to representatives from all 16 nations.

Clearly, these criminal organizations are a huge threat to Western Europe. They are less so to the United States, thank God. Our problems tend to come out of the north-south access and Burma -- not Afghanistani heroin going up into Russia and then into Europe.

So they're less of a direct threat to the American people, and I haven't focused on it as much as the real threats to us.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: General McCaffrey, thank you so much for being my guest, and good luck.

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Yeah. Thank you.

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MR. MCLAUGHLIN: General, we can learn, as you know, from what other nations have learned through their drug-policy history. In Sweden, am I correct to think that in the 1960s or thereabouts Sweden relaxed its laws on drug usage, correct?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Mm-hmm. (Affirmative.) Yeah, exactly.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: What happened -- what is the state of affairs in Sweden? What did it learn from that?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, I think they -- I think today they've got probably the best drug policy in Europe. And I went there to learn from them. I think their programs on drug treatment and criminal justice system are first-rate. I think their prevention policies aimed at young people are excellent. There's a lot to admire.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: So today there's no legalization and no decriminalization of drug usage in Sweden, correct?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: No. And to boot, part of the culture, the queen stands against the use of drugs by young kids.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: So they moved away from that experimental period in the '60s when they did relax laws and conditions for the usage of drugs.

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Mm-hmm. And it went wrong on them, predictably.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: How wrong did it go?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: Well, they got a huge problem. And that included drug -- alcohol abuse by youngsters, too, which they've got some very sensible policies on.

MR. MCLAUGHLIN: So they have really developed a very conservative outlook on this issue, correct?

GEN. MCCAFFREY: And a very balanced outlook. And they're a model that the Europeans watch very closely.

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