

Performance Enhancing Drugs: Regular Armies, Irregular Armies and Beyond

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Abstract: Promoters of Moral Enhancement have argued that it is necessary for people to use consciousness-altering strategies (e.g. psychoactive drugs) to help society address moral issues. Proponents believe that through a biochemical re-modulation of our inclinations and priorities we might finally achieve greater moral goals for humanity (e.g. reducing pollution). Without sharing the same vision of a better world, one group of people seems to be the first willing to implement (Im)Moral Enhancement on a large scale. The widespread use of Captagon (an amphetamine used and produced in large quantities in Syria) by ISIS terrorists in the recent Paris attacks and in war zones in Syria and Iraq underlines this reality. This is certainly not the first case in which members of a military force use drugs to increase courage or coolness during action. There is evidence of the use of amphetamines such as Dexedrine among US Air Force pilots. This awareness pushes us to question if we can indeed distinguish the use of Performance Enhancing Drugs between regular and irregular armies (i.e. terrorists). Through a comparison of the two situations, this investigation will use the context of the Middle East and the military to rethink the increasing centrality of Performance Enhancing Drugs in Western society.

Keywords: Drugs, Enhancement, Performance, War.

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