Milton Friedman

1. MF says “Prohibition is an attempted cure that makes matters worse.” What does he think the history lesson of alcohol prohibition in the USA is?
2. What is “forbidden fruit” psychology, and how does it apply to drug use, especially among younger people?
3. In what ways does MF think making drugs illegal leads to the corruption of police officers, customs officers, judges, and so on?
4. As an economist, MF uses much supply-and-demand and cost-benefit-prices-profit language. For example: If prohibiting the *supply* of drugs from international sources increases the *cost* of importing them, then the *prices* to consumers will increase. Therefore, addicted consumers will commit more crime to cover the higher *prices*, and *suppliers* (e.g., organized criminals, who don’t care much about legality) will be attracted to the higher *profits*. In what way does such economic reasoning predict accurately the behavior of buyers and sellers of illegal drugs?
5. MF claims that “Had drugs been decriminalized …, ‘crack’ [cocaine] would never have been invented.” Why not?

William Bennett

1. In his second paragraph, WB says: “If the argument for drug legalization has one virtue it is its sheer simplicity,” and in the next three sentences he summarizes MF’s arguments. Does he do so accurately, in your judgment?
2. WB says that Prohibition is “an analogy favored but misunderstood by legalization advocates.” Why?
3. The important question, WB says, is: “what are the costs of not enforcing laws against drugs?” What main costs does he then go on to consider?
4. WB rejects MF’s argument that money spent on the drug war would be better spent on counseling and rehab for drug users. Why?
5. WB agrees partially with MF about illegal drugs and street crime: “Your proposal might conceivably reduce the amount of gang- and dealer-related crime.” If so, what other considerations lead him to reject MF’s end-the-drug-war proposal?

Comparing MF and WB

1. MF’s top value seems to be: “The drug war cannot be won by those tactics without undermining the human liberty and individual freedom ….” By contrast, WB’s seems to be: “I remain an ardent defender our nation’s laws … because I believe drug use is wrong.” Does this mean that MF is willing to leave people *free*, even if some/many will do *wrong* things with their freedom? And does it mean that WB is willing to limit people’s *freedom* when he thinks they’re doing something *wrong*?