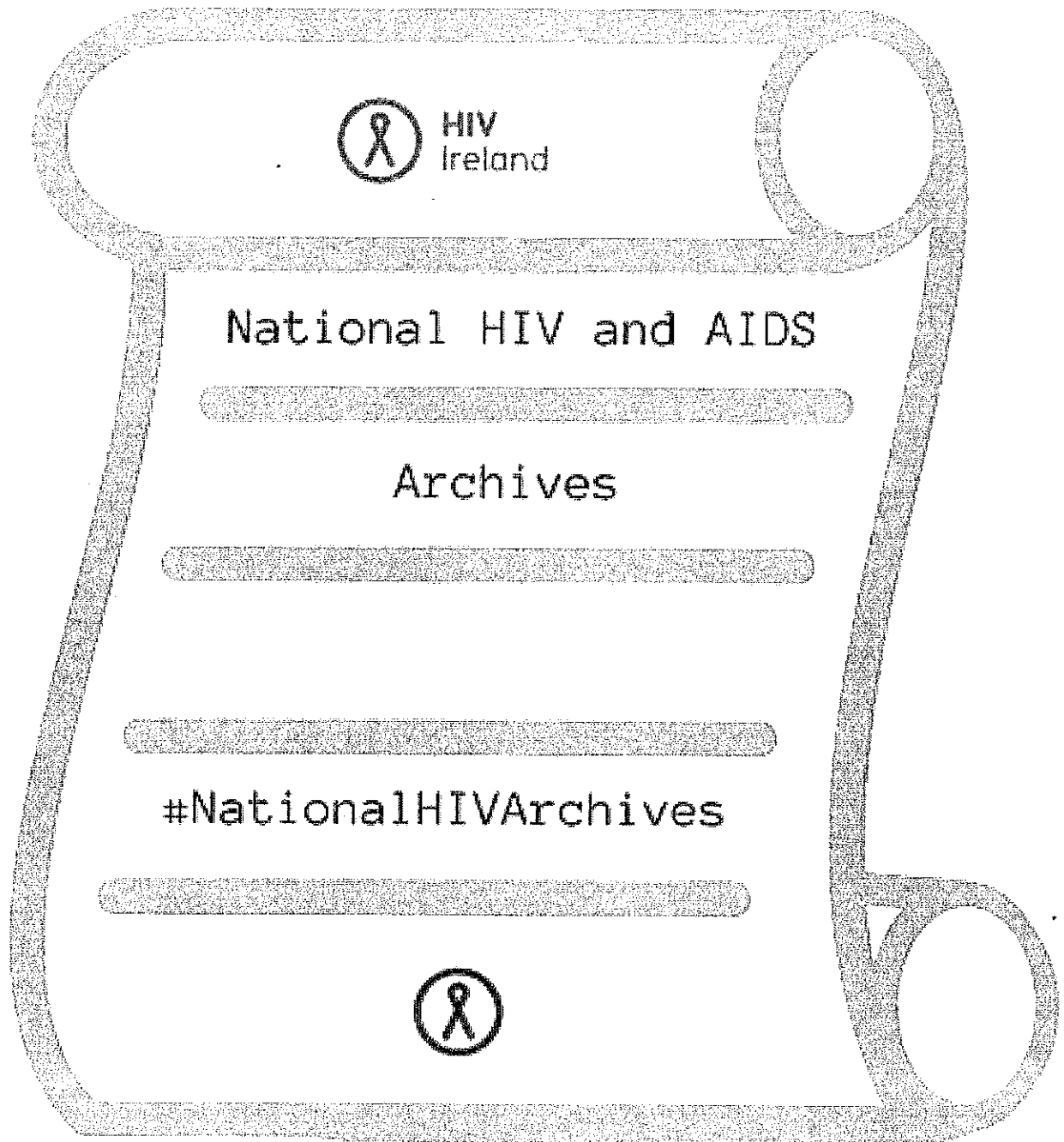


Print Media



11th to 15th June 1987

US stand on AIDS rejected ^{1/6/87}

BY STEWART FLEMING

The BROAD outline of the Reagan Administration's recent stand on AIDS was rejected implicitly yesterday at the Venice summit.

Saying that efforts to combat AIDS needed to be intensified and made more effective through international co-operation, a chairman's statement on AIDS was issued in Venice saying that the attack on the disease had to be based on the principles of human rights.

The statement went on to say that in the absence of a

vaccine or cure "a strategy based on educating the public about the seriousness of the AIDS epidemic, the way the AIDS virus is transmitted and the practical steps each person can take to avoid acquiring it or spreading it" is needed.

After a fierce debate within the Reagan Administration, the President last month announced that the federal government would require testing of people for AIDS where it had authority such, as in prisons or dealing with

immigrants.

Where it lacked such authority, the Administration said it would encourage AIDS testing, for example in the case of couples seeking a marriage licence.

The Administration has also avoided placing emphasis on practical education to combat AIDS by instructing children about the use of condoms. Conservatives in the White House have maintained that this would encourage immorality and could tend to weaken family ties.

Irish Independent
11th June 1987

Convent denies AIDS claim

A spokesperson for Our Lady of Sion Convent, Nayan, angrily denied a claim by Dr. ELIZABETH Kubber-Rose, a noted medical expert, that AIDS victims had not been allowed into a conference at the convent on the care of the dying.

The administrator of the convent's conference centre said: "We were told at the last minute that extra people wanted to attend and we simply did not have the room to accommodate any extra people. It would make no difference if they were AIDS victims or not."

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Irish Press
11th June 1987

AIDS risk

IRISH women are more at risk from aids than their counterparts in England. This is the claim of a newly formed information and support group based in Dublin.

'Women and Aids,' is anxious to educate women throughout the country about the dangers of AIDS.

The Women and AIDS group claim that more women per head of population, who have been tested in this country, are AIDS anti-body positive.

Brenda Harvey, spokeswoman for the group, points out that if these women become pregnant, their chances of developing 'full blown AIDS' greatly increases. In addition, 24 babies have already been born here with the anti-body positive. (Two of these returned negative tests later, while two others developed complete AIDS).

The task of educating Irish women to the AIDS danger is made difficult, says Brenda, firstly because there is more funding available in Britain for groups like this. Secondly, AIDS anti-body positive women in other countries are being offered abortions.

"In this country, women do not have that chance to save their own lives," she says.

A first 'Women and AIDS' leaflet will focus on safe sex practices for women. It will also clarify why it is dangerous for women with the anti-bodies to become pregnant, or to breastfeed in the event of having a child.

As is the case with other groups, the dilemma of funding has yet to be sorted out. However, members are available to give talks to women's groups and can be contacted by telephone at (01)710895 (Brenda), Monday to Friday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Alternatively the AIDS helpline at (01)307888 can put you in touch between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Saturdays or 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Mondays. The postal address is PO Box 1884, Sheriff Street, Dublin 1.

Women and AIDS' will facilitate a special workshop at the forthcoming Women's Studies Congress in Trinity College, Dublin, Friday July 10 at 1.30 p.m.

Clare Farrell

SV

Irish Press
11th June 1987

Call to step up fight against AIDS

THE seven countries at the Venice summit pledged to work together to find a cure for the deadly disease AIDS.

They called for medical research into the disease to be coordinated among the Seven to avoid duplication of efforts. It said the Geneva-based World Health Organisation (WHO) was best suited to oversee the global effort to develop a vaccine against Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

"In the absence of a vaccine or cure, the best hope for the combat and prevention of AIDS rests on a strategy based on educating the public about the seriousness of the AIDS epidemic," the summit statement said.

It cited a French joint research accord, signed in March between Washington and Paris to settle a lawsuit between competing researchers in France and the United States over who first isolated the AIDS virus, as an example for other cities to follow.

The summiters warned against abuse of human rights in the fight against AIDS and adopted a proposal from French President Francois Mitterrand to set up an ethics committee on the issue.

In a separate statement on drugs, they called for a global campaign against the production and distribution of narcotics and to find substitute crops for peasants who grow them.

Irish Press
11th June 1987

Convent 'did not' spurn AIDS victim

1 p
4/6/87

An AIDS patient, who was turned away from a workshop on death and dying at a Navan Convent, was not discriminated against, a spokesman for Our Lady of Sion Convent said last night.

Ms Aileen Collins, administrator of the conference at the convent in Bellinter, was replying to claims by Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Rose, well-known for her work with terminally ill people for 20 years.

Earlier this week, Dr. Kubler-Rose told a packed public meeting in Dublin that AIDS patients were not allowed attend the week-long workshop, organised by Turning Point, and for which she had come to Ireland.

However, Ms Collins said

the workshop numbers had already reached the capacity of the conference centre and late last Friday night they were asked if two more people, one of them an AIDS sufferer, could attend.

"We had to refuse because we simply did not have the accommodation. The centre caters for 65 and we had gone to the limits to take 84, when we were asked to accept two more," she explained.

She added: "The centre caters for up to 3,000 people a year at conferences, and we never ask if those coming are AIDS victims or not. There was not question of discrimination."

Dr. Kubler-Rose had told the meeting there were 28 AIDS babies in Dublin's

Rotunda Hospital and the Sisters of Sion were in charge. She said it was especially sad that nuns, "who are supposed to be the elite of Christians", were involved in the incident.

But Ms Collins firmly rejected any involvement by the sisters, stating that while they were responsible for the centre, they had not interfered in any way. She said that at the time of the incident, the Superior, Sr. Maura, was actually out of the country.

The sisters of the convent, she added, fully endorsed the Catholic Bishops' statement on AIDS, calling for prevention and care and stressing the need to prevent discrimination against those with AIDS.

SV

Irish Times
11th June 1987

Sisters deny excluding AIDS patients

THE SISTERS of Sion, who run Ballinler House, Co Meath, where Mrs Elisabeth Kubler-Ross is holding a workshop on dying and death this week, yesterday denied that they had prevented AIDS patients from attending lectures.

The Administrator at the Navan-based conference house, Ms Aileen Collins said that the sisters wholeheartedly endorsed the statements of the Catholic bishops made on the establishment of a National Task Force on AIDS and denied that they had discriminated against AIDS sufferers in any way.

"We accept anybody to our workshops and are not aware what they might be suffering from," she said. "In this particular instance we had capacity in the house for 65 participants in the seminar. We were able to squeeze in 84 by putting mattresses on the floor. When we were asked to accept two more people it was just impossible to accommodate them."

Ms Collins said that the sisters were unaware that whether or not the seminar participants or those extra people who could not be accommodated had AIDS or not. "We do not discriminate and it was just unfortunate in this situation that an AIDS sufferer had to be excluded," she added.

Ms Collins was speaking after Mrs Kubler-Ross, who is conducting the death and dying workshop, expressed sorrow that the Sisters of Sion "prevented AIDS patients" from attending the workshop.

London Times
11th June 1987

Vaccine 'the way ahead in fight against Aids'

By Thomson Prentice, Science Correspondent

The rapid spread of Aids might be fought more effectively by using a vaccine on people already infected than by conventional immunization, a leading expert has suggested.

Dr Jonas Salk, who developed the first vaccine against poliomyelitis in 1955, proposes this radical change in vaccination strategy in *Nature*, the scientific journal, today.

He recommends more research into the possibility of blocking the progress of the disease in individuals carrying the Aids virus, but who have not acquired fatal symptoms.

Carriers of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) may remain healthy and symptomless for years after they have been infected. That long incubation period could be exploited, he says.

If a vaccine could prevent the progression of Aids in carriers it would have a greater impact on the epidemic than would an immunization strategy aimed at people not infected, Dr Salk says.

If it could also reduce the contagiousness of HIV carri-

ers then the virus reservoir in the population would be rapidly reduced, as would the frequency of newly acquired infections.

Dr Salk, of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, in San Diego, California, says that in the early stages the body's immune system is effective against the HIV infection.

Aids develops only when there is a decline in the supply of antibodies

One possibility would be to develop a vaccine based on genes from HIV which are known to stimulate the production of antibodies.

An alternative would be to use the serum components found in the blood of newly infected people, Dr Salk says.

● AI-127, a drug derived from ordinary egg yolks which can slow the progression of Aids, could soon be given approval by the US Food and Drug Administration.

● The Government is pressing ahead with plans to stage an international Aids conference in London, after support for the idea at the Venice summit yesterday.

SL

Lord Astor puts AIDS to the test



John and Fiona: Down on the farm temporarily

THE worldwide fear of AIDS is bringing rich dividends for millionaire Lord Astor of Hever, who last year returned to England after 11 years of self-imposed exile in the South of France.

Astor, who will be 41 next week, has been making frequent trips to the USA as a director of the New Jersey-based company Electro-Nucleonics Inc, which is making a fortune selling AIDS testing kits — it was one of the first companies to be licensed to do so.

'We have a big percentage of the American market — we have contracts with the U.S. Army — and we're trying to break into the European market. President Reagan has said various groups of people will have to be tested so there is tremendous growth potential in the field,' says John Astor.

'I came to be involved through my lawyer, who is legal counsel for the company. I've always been interested in the health field.'

Lord Astor is living temporarily in a farm cottage in Kent, with his wife Fiona and their three daughters, while waiting for his recently purchased £700,000 house at Edenbridge to be refurbished.

The six-bedroomed house is only 15 miles from Hever Castle, the ancestral home his late father Gavin (who was proprietor of The Times) sold for £11 million in 1983.

SV

Financial Times
12th June 1987

Hepatitis closes station

Doctors closed a Birmingham police station for cleaning after a man walked in, naked, bleeding from a mugging, and suffering from Hepatitis "B."

Irish Times
12th June 1987

AIDS ban denial said to be untrue

By Mark Brennock

THE ORGANISER of a conference on dying and death yesterday insisted that the nuns who run the conference venue had refused to allow AIDS patients to attend the conference. The Sisters of Sion, who run Ballinter House, Co Meath, have denied any discrimination.

The conference is being run by the organisation Turning Point, who brought Dr Elisabeth Kubler-Ross to Ireland to speak at meetings and address the conference. Dr Ross had told a public meeting in the Mansion House earlier this week that AIDS patients had been refused permission by the Sisters of Sion to attend. The administrator of the conference centre, Ms Aileen Collins, strongly denied this.

Yesterday, the conference organiser, Ms Kay Conroy said that Ms Collins statement was

"totally untrue". Ms Collins had said that two AIDS sufferers had been turned away because there was no accommodation for them, but Ms Conroy maintains that further participants were accepted after the AIDS patients had been refused.

Last week, Ms Conroy said the sisters had told her that several participants had telephoned them expressing concern that AIDS patients might be attending. When the sisters were informed that AIDS patients had expressed an interest in going, according to Ms Conroy, the sisters had decided not to accept them.

Ms Conroy said yesterday that she was surprised at the statement from the sisters contradicting her version of events. "This conference is to try to extend life and look after the welfare of the terminally ill, not to make them feel that they're outcasts in society," she said.

SUNDAY INDEPENDENT, JUNE 14, 1987

Spina bifida hopes from Aids probes

By TREVOR DANKER

RESEARCH into Aids could have led to a major breakthrough by an Irish doctor into the crippling and incurable disease, spina bifida.

Dr. Gregory Atkins, of Trinity College, has been working on an unique research programme into the primary causes of spina bifida, the country's most crippling birth defect — seven times more prevalent than multiple sclerosis, polio and many other diseases

As a result of co-operation between the R and D committee of the Irish Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus and other international bodies working on the same thing, Dr. Atkins thinks they may have arrived at an important breakthrough.

It involves the theory that the disease could be caused by an elusive virus infection early in the pregnancy of genetically

susceptible mothers.

Dr. Atkins has discovered through his research that the only way to find this virus is to look for virus 'footprints'.

And this is done through a highly specialised technique using what are called DNA probes.

The Aids connection comes in through the sudden paramount attention being paid to finding a cure for this new disease that is spreading throughout the world.

A similar type of DNA probe examining human cells for a cure to Aids is apparently providing invaluable information for Dr. Atkins in his research into spina bifida.

The voluntary Irish Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus is desperately seeking funds to raise the £70,000 needed over the next three years for research.

They are appealing to industry and the Government

With AIDS Around Prostitution Isn't A 'Victimless' Crime

By MARK A.R. KLEIMAN

Our grandchildren, looking back at their grandparents' failure to control the AIDS epidemic while it was still controllable, will be puzzled and outraged by several things. Their historians will ask, among other questions, "Why didn't they do anything sensible about prostitution?"

Between 1,000 and 10,000 American men will become infected with the AIDS virus this year by having sex with female prostitutes. Most of these men will not fall into any other risk group. They will continue to have other sexual relations, putting their partners (and their partners' partners and children) at risk. The thousands of infections resulting directly from prostitution will lead to additional thousands of secondary and tertiary infections. And the spread of HIV, the AIDS virus, among the "general" population complicates efforts to control the epidemic.

Thus it is urgent to control the spread of the virus via prostitution, by reducing (1) the number of sexual contacts between prostitutes and customers, (2) the riskiness (to the customer) of each individual sex act, or (3) the proportion of working prostitutes infected with the virus.

Both publicity and law enforcement can contribute to reducing the number of sexual acts between prostitutes and customers. The prostitution trade won't shrink by itself. Despite all the attention given AIDS to date, prostitution still flourishes. Health authorities blame it for an upsurge in syphilis cases in some metropolitan areas.

As long as purchased sex posed no health risk that antibiotics couldn't control, persuading customers to change their habits or prostitutes to change their professions seemed extremely difficult and only marginally worthwhile. Nor did enforcing the laws against selling and buying sexual favors deserve high priority for overworked police, prosecutors and correctional facilities. AIDS changes all that; no longer can practicing prostitution or patronizing prostitutes be called a victimless crime. Yet enforcement practices in the United States have not noticeably changed.

Enforcement efforts against prostitution could include more arrests and stronger penalties, particularly for repeat offenders. Instead of concentrating on streetwalkers, police could target "massage parlors," "escort services" and other prostitution fronts: high-volume businesses where, according to a recent study by Laurie Clarke of Harvard's Kennedy School, high-risk sex acts are more common, and condom use less common, than they are among streetwalkers. Arresting customers may do more to discourage the trade than arresting prostitutes, particularly if names are publicized in a way that links the crackdown on prostitution to the control of AIDS.

The other way to reduce the number of sexual acts with prostitutes is to reduce demand through "negative advertising," based on serious market research. Who are prostitutes' customers? What do they know? Would it help to convince them that "real men" do not visit prostitutes? Reducing the risks involves introducing condoms or educating customers and prostitutes about the relative dangers of various sexual acts.

Condoms are a long way from perfect protection against AIDS transmission, but they are much better than nothing. They act both as a barrier against the virus itself and as protection from other sexually transmitted

of Harvard's Kennedy School, high-risk sex acts are more common, and condom use less common, than they are among streetwalkers. Arresting customers may do more to discourage the trade than arresting prostitutes, particularly if names are publicized in a way that links the crackdown on prostitution to the control of AIDS.

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Condoms are a long way from perfect protection against AIDS transmission, but they are much better than nothing. They act both as a barrier against the virus itself and as protection from other sexually transmitted diseases, whose lesions may serve as entryways for the virus. There is some evidence from New York that condom use is becoming more common. Here enforcement has little contribution to make (aside from ending the confiscation of condoms carried by arrested prostitutes); the main task is to educate prostitutes and their customers.

The proportion of working prostitutes who carry the virus depends on (1) how many prostitutes are infected by needle-sharing; (2) how many of them are infected by customers; and (3) whether infected prostitutes are forced to leave the trade. The first two are hard to influence; the third presents real opportunities.

If prostitution were legal, as in parts of Europe, frequent testing and license revocation could keep the infection rate among prostitutes to a small fraction of 1%. Customers would be on notice that contact with unlicensed prostitutes was riskier.

As long as prostitution is illegal in the U.S., testing will have to be less frequent and more sporadic. Still, prostitutes, particularly the drug-dependent prostitutes who are most likely to be infected, are arrested rather frequently. If those convicted of prostitution or narcotics possession were routinely tested for the virus, a large proportion of infected prostitutes would be identified over the course of a year. Practicing prostitution after testing positive could subject the offender to more serious criminal sanctions or to isolation ordered by the public-health authorities.

These policies all have costs and complexities. All require more careful analysis than anyone has yet given them. Some require new legislation. Some will interfere with each other. Telling customers "Don't visit prostitutes, but when you do, use condoms" is tricky. So is appealing to prostitutes to keep their partners and themselves safe while trying to put them out of business. Some steps, such as legalizing prostitution or advising customers about safe sex acts and the use of condoms are likely to raise moralistic objections. Any proposal has to overcome what George Bush has called the "giggle factor," the sense that subjects of locker-room humor can't really be serious matters for public action.

The world first must acknowledge that the AIDS epidemic makes prostitution policy important, that the main goal of such policy should be preventing the spread of disease, and that, where prostitution is involved, public health takes precedence over private morality and sexual privacy. Beyond that, let us hope that, before the epidemic is utterly uncontrollable, elected officials will stop giggling.

Mr. Kleiman teaches public policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.