

FOIA MARKER

This is not a textual record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

Collection/Record Group: Clinton Presidential Records

Subgroup/Office of Origin: National AIDS Policy Office

Series/Staff Member:

Subseries:

OA/ID Number: 21063

FolderID:

Folder Title:

Press Miscellaneous [1]

Stack:

S

Row:

67

Section:

1

Shelf:

1

Position:

1

News from the White House Office of National AIDS Policy

For Immediate Release
April 30, 2000

Contact: Jeff Kamen
202-456-2441, 202-486-6188

White House AIDS Czar Rejects Senator Lott's Comments

"Senator Lott's statement is flat out wrong. The idea that the new national security threat assessment of AIDS was motivated by politics is absurd and reflects a lack of understanding of the facts as accepted by public health officials worldwide. For instance, in seven countries in sub-Saharan Africa, 20 per cent or more of adults are infected and will die of the disease within the next few years. As a result of AIDS, more than 40 million children in the region will be orphaned. In much of the area in the next few years, infant mortality will double, child mortality will triple and life expectancy will drop by 20 years or more. It doesn't take an expert to figure out that this will be terribly destabilizing with untold political and diplomatic consequences as decades of hard won progress is wiped out by the assault of HIV/AIDS. As the National Intelligence Council's Estimate warns, as goes Africa, so will go India, Southeast Asia and the former Soviet Union. At the end of the day, this global pandemic will make the bubonic plague of the middle ages pale in comparison unless our response is finally commensurate with the magnitude of the problem," White House AIDS Czar Sandra Thurman said today in a statement released by her office following the reporting of Senator Lott's comments.

FROM THE A.P. STORY ON UNAIDS REPORT 6/26/00

Piot said one of the reasons for the explosion of cases in southern Africa is the legacy of apartheid, which separated men from their families in rural areas and forced them to work in towns, with only prostitutes for relief. But he said governments were also to blame for ignoring the problem for too long.

``What is happening in southern Africa should be a lesson for countries today which don't have a big problem yet," he said. ``I'm thinking of Asia, I'm thinking of eastern Europe, I'm thinking of the Caribbean."

About \$4 billion is needed annually for prevention and education programs to turn the tide, Piot said. He called for debt-relief programs for poor countries.

Sandra Thurman, director of President Clinton's White House Office on AIDS policy, said the report urgently underscores the need for government leaders to face the crisis head on.

``It will take the engagement of all sectors of all societies if we want to win the battle against AIDS," Thurman said in a statement from Washington.

Although Asia has relatively low infection rates overall, there are fears that could change because of the density of its population. Some 0.7 percent of the Indian population is HIV-positive, or 3.7 million people overall. The disease has so far been largely confined to drug addicts.

Top World News

Zimbabwe opposition ponders Mugabe peace offer

Albright in Middle East to seek peace summit

US urges strong anti-AIDS efforts after UN report

Elian could be spending last night in U.S.

UN official sees way to independence in E. Timor

Fiji army beefs up security after bomb threats

Colombia government, rebels ask Castro to mediate

Hizbollah no longer in shadows of Lebanese

Taliban build highway as world mulls sanctions

Jerry Hall says Mick Jagger moves in next to her

Last Updated: 03:02 GMT 28th June

[Return to main News page](#)

US urges strong anti-AIDS efforts after UN report

WASHINGTON, June 27 (Reuters) - The United States on Tuesday said a new United Nations report on the AIDS epidemic should spur greater efforts to prevent the global spread of the deadly disease.

"The terrible truths documented in the new UNAIDS report must not become a cause for surrender. Instead these facts must embolden our efforts to prevent the further spread of HIV and to get treatment to those already infected," said Sandra Thurman, director of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS.

A grim report released on Tuesday by the UNAIDS program said the AIDS epidemic continues to ravage Africa, where one in five adults is living with the deadly virus in some countries.

In Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana, at least one in every two 15-year-old boys will die of AIDS, it said.

Thurman said Uganda, the epicenter of the epidemic in the 1980s, had cut its infection rate in half, and its formula could be made to work elsewhere.

"With powerful, determined leadership, the silence about AIDS, and the stigma attached to the disease, can be broken and the facts about how it is spread and how it can be prevented can be shared," Thurman said in a statement.

She said efforts to combat AIDS in Africa had dramatically increased, but the U.N. report underscored the need for the United States and other countries to do more.

"The U.S. cannot and should not do this alone. It will take the engagement of all sectors of all societies if we want to win the battle against AIDS," she said.



© 2000 Reuters Limited. All rights reserved. Reproduction or redistribution of Reuters content, including by framing or similar means, is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of Reuters. Reuters shall not be liable for any errors or delays in the content, or for any actions taken in reliance thereon.

THE HILL INTERVIEW

White House AIDS Czar Sandra Thurman

Women, young and minorities at increasing risk from AIDS epidemic

Sandra Thurman, director of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy, spoke with Editor Albert Eisele and Features Editor Mary Lynn F. Jones last week about what her office is doing to educate the public about the AIDS epidemic in the United States and around the world, progress in AIDS research, her recent trip to Africa with President Clinton, and the myths that still exist about the disease. Excerpts follow.

Q: What is the status of the AIDS epidemic in this country?

A: The epidemic has changed dramatically in the past 10 years. We moved from an epidemic that was largely gay white men to an epidemic with new infections that is largely women and young people and people of color. Over 50 percent of all new infections are in people under 25 years of age. ... Our epidemic much more mirrors the epidemic in the rest of the world, which is fairly predictable in public health terms, but for public perception, people are a little shocked by that.

And there is complacency in the public. With all of the headlines and good news with the new drug therapies and the declines in AIDS deaths and AIDS diagnoses, what people fail to understand is we haven't had the drop in new infections that we would like to see. In the United States, we've stabilized at about 40,000 infections a year, and haven't seen a drop in that in almost a decade. So, it simply tells us we have a lot more work to do on the prevention side.

Q: What can you do to change that?

A: We need to do a media campaign. We need to do some general reeducating of the American public that the epidemic is still raging in America, that we don't have the epidemic under control. And then we need to really look at how we target the groups most at risk and that is always a challenge, especially basic education programs, talking about educating school kids or [doing] outreach to young people, which is so important.

These decisions that are made in the school curriculum are made at the local level. In some places in the United States we have great education campaigns and in other places in America we still have problems saying the word condom. So we are a little hamstrung on the national front from being able to ... be effective as we would like to be. ...

The good news is there still is great bipartisan support for AIDS programming both domestically and internationally. ... The biggest funding mechanism for treatment of people with AIDS, the Ryan White CARE Act, just passed both houses unanimously. It is up for federal reauthorization and we expect that to happen within the next couple of weeks.

Q: Does that include support from the religious right and the conservative right?

A: We have never had any disagreements on care and treatment for



AIDS Czar Thurman says the epidemic is not under control.

education. We still have some differences there. But for the most part, we have come a long way, even with some of our conservatives.

Q: Is AIDS still largely a male disease?

A: It is still largely men, but that is changing dramatically. ... About 20 percent of the people with AIDS now are women. It is coming up, and in the early part of the epidemic that wasn't the case. In Africa, it is largely an epidemic of women. ... We can't just talk about AIDS as a fundamental health issue. It is a gender issue. It is a fundamental economic issue. It is a security and stability issue. It is a poverty issue. ...

Q: Is there a correlation between income levels and incidents of AIDS?

A: That is increasingly true in the United States. We see that not just with AIDS, but with most diseases. ... There is a real gap that has existed long term in health care for women and for people of color. We have been trying to close the gap and address those disparities in health care. ...

We are in a position where we really have to make sure that we continue to focus on our own program because we can't tell other countries or other leaders that they have got to do x, y and z if our own house isn't in order. ...

AIDS research. We are spending over \$200 million a year on research to find a vaccine or vaccines for HIV, but we are years away from finding a vaccine and years away from finding a cure. So our focus has to be on prevention. ...

The other thing that is a real challenge is that we need to find therapies that are cheaper and easier to administer. These triple combination therapies are ... very complex therapy, very hard to manage and have awful side effects. Some people can't take them at all. They cost between \$12,000 and \$15,000 a year. That is expensive by U.S. standards. ... When we look at the fact that 95 percent of the people infected with HIV live in the developing world where we are spending \$5 to \$10 per capita on health care across the board, the gap between \$15,000 and \$5 is very significant. ...

Q: There was recently an AIDS in the workplace conference in Vermont. Are employers today more compassionate and understanding than a decade ago?

A: I have looked at this epidemic for 18 years and [you] see the dramatic change from the early days when people lost their jobs, when people were thrown out of their apartments. ... I had to go help people get their belongings off the front lawn. I have seen crosses burned in someone's front yard. So we have made great strides in this country at eliminating the

dreamed that they would ever be in a position to go back to work, who really had spent many years planning their imminent death instead of their life, are now finding themselves in the unusual position of having to go back to work. ...

Q: If you have to choose to allocate resources to either prevention or treatment, which is more effective?

A: That is a very hard question. ... Every infection that we prevent, we save a lot of money on the other side. ... Having said that, once people are infected, we have an obligation to make sure that we get them the best treatment possible. ...

Q: How much federal money goes toward AIDS research?

A: It is hard to calculate because a lot of our people with HIV and AIDS are covered under Medicaid. We are spending almost \$2 billion a year for research, we are spending \$1.7 billion under Ryan White for care and treatment of people. We are spending over \$700 million a year for prevention programs at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. We are spending over \$200 million at the Housing and Urban Development Department for ... housing for people living with HIV and AIDS. So if you add it up, it is not an insignificant amount of money. We can always use more, of course.

Q: What did you learn about the dimensions of the AIDS epidemic in Africa during your recent trip there with President Clinton?

A: It is getting worse in terms of the numbers of people getting infected. What we do see that is new is increased political leadership on the issue. [Nigerian President Olusegun] Obasanjo has agreed to host a meeting of African heads of states specifically on AIDS in the spring. ...

They are at a very critical point. The infection rates in Nigeria are about just over 5 percent of the general population, which is high for west Africa, but low for other parts of Africa. So if they can manage to conduct a very aggressive and productive prevention campaign, we are hoping we can help them.

Q: How do you view South African President Thabo Mbeki's statements earlier this year that HIV doesn't necessarily cause AIDS?

A: It is unfortunate, in our opinion and in the opinion of most scientists around the world. There is clearly a link. HIV clearly causes AIDS, and that has been established for over a decade. To go back and revisit the issue isn't always helpful. On the flip side of that, the attention that the exchange has brought to the epidemic has been extraordinary. ...

ple with AIDS, but where we hang most of the time is on prevention and talk about the tough talk, about condoms, talk about abstinence and condoms, and basic health education and AIDS

Q: Is AIDS research much further along than when you took office in 1997?

A: Clearly, we have made great progress on the treatment front. We are spending nearly \$2 billion at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on

stigma and discrimination. It still exists, but there is a lot less of it.

People with AIDS are covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act, which is very exciting. Now, with these new treatments, we see people who never

Q: What is the biggest myth about AIDS that still exists?

A: The big myth is that AIDS is still a gay, white man's disease. AIDS, in fact, is an equal opportunity killer. ... The second is that the epidemic is under control in this country, because it is not.

Boston Globe 3/18/99

US details ravages of illness in Africa

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - AIDS has cut the average life expectancy in Zimbabwe by a quarter-century, the US Census Bureau reports.

Life expectancy in Zimbabwe is now 39 years, down from 65 were it not for the AIDS epidemic, the bureau said in a report being released today. Other African nations also show significant reductions in life expectancy, because of AIDS.

"AIDS results in higher mortality rates in childhood, as well as among young adults where mortality otherwise is low," said Karen Stanek, a contributing author of the Census Bureau's new report, "World Population Profile: 1998."

"As a result, AIDS deaths will have a larger impact on life expectancies than on some other demographic indicators in these nations."

Other African nations besides Zimbabwe and the estimated reduction in life expectancy due to AIDS:

Botswana, from 62 to 40 years; Burkina Faso, 55 to 46; Burundi, 55 to 46; Cameroon, 59 to 51; Central African Republic, 56 to 49; Republic of the Congo, 57 to 47; Congo, 54 to 49; Ethiopia, 51 to 41; Ivory Coast, 57 to 46; Kenya, 66 to 48; Lesotho, 62 to 54; Malawi, 51 to 37; Namibia, 65 to 42; Nigeria, 58 to 54; Rwanda, 54 to 42; South Africa, 65 to 56; Swaziland, 58 to 39; Uganda, 54 to 43; and Zambia, 56 to 37.

Other findings from the report:

- The world population will reach 6 billion in 1999.

- Between 1998 and 2025, the world's elderly population (age 65 and over) will more than double while the world's young (under age 15) will grow by only 6 percent.

- About 96 percent of world population increase now occurs in the developing regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

- A child born in Latin America or Asia can expect to live between seven and 13 fewer years, on average, than one born in North America or Western Europe.

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a publication.

Publications have not been scanned in their entirety for the purpose of digitization. To see the full publication please search online or visit the Clinton Presidential Library's Research Room.

a&u

February 2000 • Issue 64 • AMERICA'S AIDS MAGAZINE

Dementia

Patricia Nell Warren separates
fact from fiction

Sex Symbol

David Deluise takes on safe sex
and parenting

LIFEGUIDE:

Mixing Cocktails

Roger Anderson gives us the ins
and outs of combining protease
inhibitors

AIDS Czar **Sandra Thurman** Fighting for All of Us

\$3.95 USA • \$4.95 CANADA



Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a publication.

Publications have not been scanned in their entirety for the purpose of digitization. To see the full publication please search online or visit the Clinton Presidential Library's Research Room.

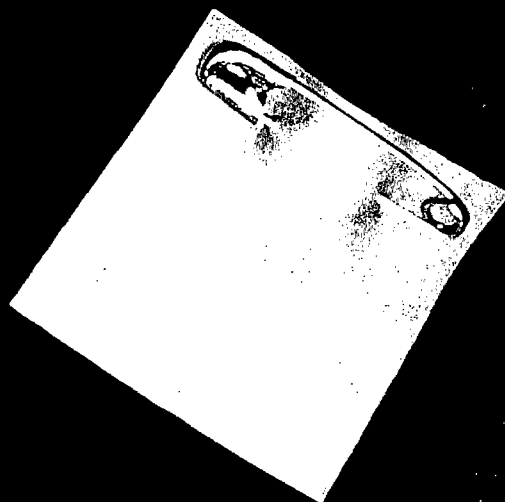
MEDICAL JOURNAL & INTERNET GUIDE

VOLUME 3

Nun

NUTRITION • MEDICINE

STATE OF



EMERGENCY MINORITIES AND HIV

COMPLIMENTS OF GLAXO WELLCOME