

World Health Organization fails to silence AIDS debate in Asia

by Sophie Tanapura

The performance of the World Health Organization (WHO) at its Sydney, Australia conference of 27 Asia-Pacific nations the week of July 20 will go a long way, one hopes, to finally destroying the WHO's stranglehold over international AIDS policy. Dr. Jonathan Mann, WHO's AIDS director, led the campaign at this conference to prevent governments from taking action against AIDS.

Dr. Mann applauded the decision taken there *not* to screen tourists traveling throughout Asia, and dedicated himself to the elimination of "myths," such as the belief that AIDS can be spread by insects. Mann cynically stated, "It would be a tragedy if people started using mosquito netting instead of condoms. It's not putting up mosquito netting, but what you do under the netting, that counts."

It has, of course, been *EIR*, and associates of *EIR* founder Lyndon LaRouche, who have insisted on the danger of insect transmission of AIDS. Mann described his efforts to dispel reality, as an "education" campaign.

The initial reaction in Thailand to the WHO conference has been total rejection. *The Nation*, one of the English-language dailies, stated in a July 24 editorial: "We are not happy with the conclusion of the ministerial meeting in Sydney, since Asia has the vast majority of the world's population, and if the disease spreads, the result will be cataclysmic." *The Nation*, in opposition to the WHO's refusal to test tourists, went on to cite the historical reality of international health standards, set decades ago, which mandated travelers to carry health certificates proving that they had been vaccinated against smallpox and inoculated against cholera. Why not, in a similar fashion, demand tests for AIDS? *The Nation* asked.

It was the absurdity of WHO statistics for Asia presented by Mann which drew the most ire from the press. He claimed only a handful of AIDS cases exist in Asia, excluding the 521 in Australia, 39 in New Zealand, and 38 in Japan. *The Nation* commented, "We cannot understand how such accurate figures were arrived at when the person suffering from AIDS will not know it himself nor will his doctor unless a

complicated and costly blood test is conducted." On insect transmission, the July 24 Thai-language *Daily News* stated: "If the report is true, we are facing a real danger here. There are mosquitoes everywhere in our country."

This attitude has not been limited to the press. Dr. Prasit Pitoonkija of the Thai Public Health and Environment Committee, citing overseas studies showing that mosquitoes are a carrier of AIDS, stated: "In one town in the U.S. where there are very few gays but a disproportionate number of AIDS cases, there are many mosquitoes. Tests confirm that mosquitoes carry the AIDS virus."

The House Public Health Committee submitted a proposal to Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda on July 24 recommending, among other measures, that:

- 1) An international agreement be required for travelers, including Thais, to have blood tests to confirm that they are AIDS-free. Tourists without AIDS-free certificates should be quarantined for blood tests.
- 2) Measures be taken to control AIDS patients from further spreading the disease to others.
- 3) More hospitals and clinics be set up for treatment.
- 4) AIDS patients at various stages be quickly discovered through a more efficient method of detection.
- 5) The government not encourage homosexuals by giving them prominent roles in society.

Bad times for bureaucrats

The last point undoubtedly refers to figures such as the self-proclaimed homosexual Dr. Seri Wongmontha, the Dean of Mass Communications at Bangkok's Thammasat University. He boldly claims, "My ambition is to be government spokesman, but I don't think that that is possible in my situation." *The Nation's* reporter, who interviewed Seri in April, responded to Seri's plans, saying that "one can never be sure that it is impossible. Public mores may change. After all, if a prophylactic pusher [Mechai Viravaidya] can become government spokesman, why can't Dr. Seri?"

Up to now AIDS policy in Thailand has been tightly controlled by the Director of Communicable Diseases, Dr. Vinij Asawasena. His attitude is best characterized by a remark he made in January: "We are concerned about the reaction of the Thai people. We do not want them to be afraid of something that has not happened, even though it could. We do not use mass education because it might cause the public to panic as has happened in the U.S."

While these brainwashed bureaucrats are hysterically maintaining the WHO line, responsible leaders are simply circumventing them. Symptomatic of this kind of mental disorder were the remarks made by the Permanent Secretary of the Health Ministry, Dr. Pirote Ningsanonda, on his way to Sydney: "To talk repeatedly about AIDS will cause the public to panic. And if there is panic, tourism will certainly be affected." Like Vinij, Pirote stresses that condoms are the best protection.

The Jimmy Carter twist

The strangest twist yet in the efforts of the condom and safe sex lobby, though, has been the sudden appearance in the Bangkok bar scene of a Mrs. Sommatra Troy. She emerged publicly in Thailand around the same time that Jimmy Carter arrived here representing the genocidal Global 2000 Foundation.

She spent the past 30 years in the United States, and as soon as she arrived in Bangkok she attempted to subvert the anti-AIDS campaign of the Schiller Institute. After her organization, "Emergency Home," received a \$40,000 contribution from Jimmy Carter, she began her campaign. Mrs. Troy described it in the following terms: "Fresh condoms must be made available everywhere for everyone. Needles should also be available free of charge for drug convicts [sic]." She claims she worked as an AIDS nurse in the United States. Her plans for the future include holding a conference allegedly to fight AIDS, which will feature Dr. Seri as the star speaker. The U.S. AID has just announced that it will donate 6 million condoms a year to Thailand's prostitutes.

In order to win the war against AIDS, it will be crucial to discredit this condom lobby in Thailand. The population has been inundated for years with the idea that condoms and other methods of birth control will be rewarded by government-sponsored incentives of all sorts. The entire infrastructure established by the World Bank and Mechai Viravaidya, the "Condom King," to implement zero population growth in Thailand, will simply be deployed to sabotage an effective program against AIDS.

However, even the Public Health Minister, Tirdpong Jayanandana, has been forced to respond to reality. After members of the House Committee on Public Health visited a hospitalized AIDS patient, Tirdpong stated his support for the conversion of an existing hospital to one for AIDS patients. Even he advocated the separation of AIDS victims from other patients. But then again it was difficult for him

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not to—after the Dean of Mahidol University's Public Health faculty said only a few days earlier, that over a million Thais (in a population of 60 million) risk contracting AIDS. Dr. Thepanom Muangmaen cited the following alarming statistics for Thailand: 200,000 homosexuals, 500-600,000 prostitutes, 500,000 drug addicts, 90,000 drug and homosexual prisoners.

Environmental cofactors: hepatitis B

The pool of potential victims of AIDS in Asia is much larger still than the so-called "high risk" groups. The widespread prevalence of AIDS "cofactors" which weaken the immune system such as tuberculosis, dengue fever, and hepatitis B (HBV) is the timebomb least identified by the WHO-controlled AIDS mafia. HBV is spread via infected blood and like AIDS, a carrier can spread it for years without knowing he has the disease. There are approximately 300 million HBV carriers in the world, of whom 225 million are Asian. About 50 million of the carriers die of HBV-induced liver disease.

According to studies done by Dr. R.P. Beasley, HBV-induced liver cancer and cirrhosis account for 20% of all deaths among middle-aged Taiwanese, with males three or four times more likely to die from these liver diseases than females. Ninety percent of Asians are exposed to hepatitis B, with between 10% and 15% becoming chronic carriers.

Doctors from the Paris-based Pasteur Institute recently touring Thailand and Indonesia warned of the threat of HBV and emphasized the availability of the vaccine Hevac B as the most effective preventive measure. An Indonesian expert has called for mass immunization against HBV. As early as 1985, Dr. Norman Murphy, a Hong Kong University psychology professor, warned of the danger of a rapid spread of AIDS through Asia, because of the population's susceptibility to HBV. He also cited the likelihood of saliva as a transmission route, since it is customary in Asia to eat food from a communal dish. This is, of course, above and beyond the fact that in Hong Kong, where homosexuality is illegal, there are an estimated 250-400,000 homosexuals out of a 5.4 million population. Most of the homosexuals marry due to in-

tense social pressure, as throughout Asia, to have a family.

Recent findings in Thailand reveal 65,000 existing tuberculosis victims in Bangkok alone, and a further 12,500 people who have just contracted the disease. According to the deputy governor of Bangkok, only 8-9,000 of these people have sought treatment at clinics and hospitals. Most of the patients are too poor to afford medical bills, he said. Likewise, there is currently a dengue fever epidemic, transmitted by mosquitoes, raging in Thailand. There are already 18,000 people infected, with the most serious drought the country has had in 10 years. Some officials worry that disease levels could reach those of 1985, when 80,000 people came down with dengue.

Indonesia under threat

Indonesia—which has recently been subjected to the infamous World Bank loan “conditionalities,” demanding 40% of its export income for debt payment—is also the scene of a growing opposition to the WHO-directed cover-up. Most significantly, the Indonesian Red Cross has demanded the obvious: the testing of all blood donors. The chairman of the International Blood Donors Conference at Jakarta, Dr. Masri Rustan, refused, insisting: “Such examinations would be too expensive for a developing country such as Indonesia. The danger of AIDS has been exaggerated by the mass media. It is just like syphilis at the time when penicillin had not been discovered.”

In 1985, Indonesian Health Minister Swardjono Surjaningrat revealed his ignorance, insisting that because there were no homosexual relationships in his country of 168 million people, AIDS could not enter there! In February 1986, the chairman of the Indonesian Medical Association reported the first carriers. In late June, the *Indonesian Observer* editorialized: “It is time to act. Now.” They demanded, like the Thais, testing for all tourists, and identified the urgency of instituting some sort of isolation policy.

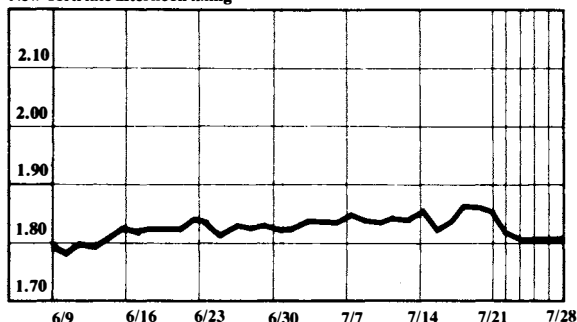
The *Observer* quoted the following comments made by an unnamed Australian doctor, speaking in Bali, Indonesia: “In authoritarian states they would put them in camps, but in democratic countries it will be more difficult. But it has to come, such as in the case of leprosy, if we don’t find a cure or vaccine soon.’ What may be more frightening is that the doctor feels we are not being told the whole truth about the spread of the disease by the experts.”

Finally, the Thai royal family has made public its concern in the form of a call by Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn, a chemist, for intensified research efforts in the domain of genetic engineering to conquer AIDS. Speaking at the same Mahidol University of Dr. Theppanom on the topic of “Genetic Engineering and Scientific Progress,” she emphasized the commitment of scientific research workers, “If we are all scared of laboratory risks, we may end up being inflicted with AIDS and cancer without anyone having researched a way out.”

Currency Rates

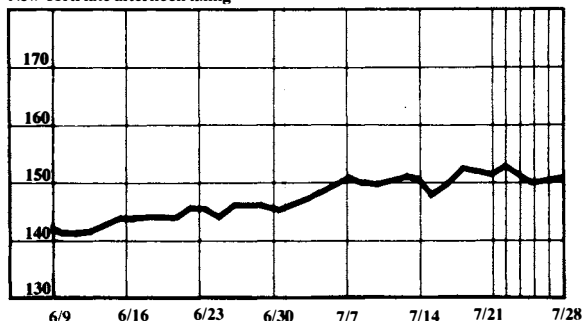
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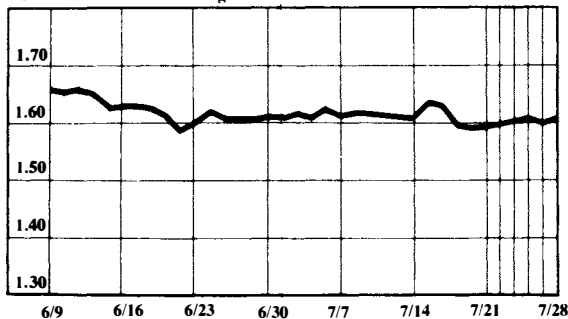
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