

Business Briefs

Health

Doctors begin to favor AIDS quarantine

Twenty-eight percent of doctors in the United States favor quarantine of AIDS victims, according to a survey released in the Jan. 20 issue of *MD* magazine.

Forty-five of the doctors surveyed said they would advise family members about to undergo elective surgery to shun donated blood, and 28% said AIDS patients should be quarantined. Doctors are skeptical about conclusions reached by public health authorities. *MD* quoted one California doctor who wrote in response to the survey: "I feel the public health agencies are negligent for not quarantining infectious persons already."

The doctors voiced concern over the safety of the nation's blood supply and 78% favored testing of high-risk individuals—rejected by the AMA and Surgeon General C. Everett Koop.

Just over half of those surveyed said an AIDS blood test should be a prerequisite for a marriage license.

It's about time. For example, one in ten New York City residents is infected with the AIDS virus, New York City Health Commissioner Dr. Stephen Joseph reported Jan. 18, warning that the course of the disease "will change everything about the city, its demography, the political and economic life of the city." Joseph disclosed that there are "500,000 people in this city who are infected" with AIDS, and predicted that by 1991, the city would have recorded 40,000 known cases of the disease, plus an additional 150,000 victims of AIDS-related illnesses.

East-West Trade

Germany to modernize Soviet nuclear plants?

West Germany may conclude a \$2.5 billion deal for modernization of Soviet nuclear power plants, one of the largest ever East-West deals, according to a report in the mass-

circulation daily *Bild Zeitung* Jan. 11.

Under the plan, West Germany would extend 2 billion deutschemarks in long-term credits, while the Soviets would supply West Germany with DM 1 billion worth of uranium. Additional financing would come through the European Community. In Bonn, Science Ministry spokesman Werner Gries said of the *Bild* report, "We are unaware of it."

Bild said that the technology agreement is being prepared in strict secrecy and that Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher was in favor of delivering the latest technology, despite U.S. misgivings.

AIDS Policy

Surgeon general denies cuts hurt research

A battle erupted in mid-January among senior administration officials over a proposal by U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop to combat AIDS with a federal sex education initiative that would teach children about "heterosexual and homosexual relationships" in elementary school. Koop has argued that Reagan administration cuts in AIDS research funding will have no effect, since, he claims, the disease cannot be contracted except through sexual contact.

Concerning the administration's proposal to cut 700 basic medical research grants at the National Institutes of Health in order to save \$325 million, Koop said on Jan. 15: "It's not going to affect AIDS." He stressed, "All of the studies which have been done would indicate that AIDS is not passed by nonsexual, casual contact. . . . You don't get it from using the same towels, by sharing the same bed, by using the same telephone, or even the same toothbrush. We have neither a drug, a cure, or a vaccine for prevention. Education is the only weapon we have." Calling for a national public education program, Koop said the best protection against AIDS, other than abstaining from sex, was to use a condom.

Critics of Koop are circulating an article in the *National Review*, which says, "It is lunacy to suggest that the AIDS epidemic

will be stopped by educating children in the exotica of homosexual practice."

The surgeon general seemed to have changed his mind a few days later, when he told *EIR* on Jan. 20, "Before we worry about the millions of children dying of AIDS in Africa, we should think about the 3,000 children with AIDS here in the United States. It is likely that 100 million people will die of AIDS by the year 2000."

Food Cartel

Amstutz let Cargill ship bad soybeans

U.S. Undersecretary of Agriculture Daniel Amstutz intervened to permit the Cargill food conglomerate to export adulterated soybeans, according to Minnesota Agriculture Secretary Jim Nicholls, who briefed the press after an "International Trade Conference" event in Mankato, Minnesota, Jan. 13.

Nicholls described a case in 1986, in which Cargill loaded a ship in Duluth with out-of-grade soybeans. Minnesota state grain inspectors determined that 25% of the beans were damaged and refused to permit the ship to sail.

According to Nicholls, "Danny Amstutz," a 25-year Cargill man, was informed by Cargill; he called the federal grain inspection service, who then countermanded the Minnesota state inspectors, and ordered the ship to sail with the cargo as is. Nicholls said that Amstutz did this in many instances last year. "We're powerless to stop it."

Trade War

Kirkland demands 'tough' trade bill

AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland and other top U.S. labor leaders urged Congress to pass a tough trade bill this year in appearances before the Senate Finance Committee Jan. 20. "Scores of domestic industries and millions of American workers have been left

defenseless against an onslaught of imports spurred by foreign government practices and vagaries of U.S. macro-economic policy," Kirkland stated.

Kirkland and the AFL-CIO have consistently refused to attack the Federal Reserve policies which destroyed U.S. industry and made America dependent on imports for more than one-fifth of its domestic consumption, as high as one-third of U.S. consumption of manufactured goods. Instead, he blames foreign exporters.

Otherwise, his testimony only showed how easy it is to attack administration economic policy. "For the first time in our history, we have a generation of Americans who cannot reasonably expect to do as well as their parents did," he continued. Real wages for factory workers have declined 9% from 1977 to 1986, he claimed (it is actually much more).

"The absence of a strong and predictable U.S. trade policy has contributed significantly to their fate."

Owen Bieber, the United Autoworkers' president, agreed: "The administration's commitment to the policies of the past has contributed to a serious deterioration in U.S. economic capacity and potential, to an increase in poverty . . . [and] higher unemployment."

R&D

Japan bases its future on development

Japan is staking its future on science, with an economic strategy based on scientific breakthroughs through the 21st century.

Japan has increased its R&D spending by 12.6% over fiscal year 1984. A full 2.8% of Japan's GNP is spent on research and development, with 80% accounted for by private institutions.

According to well-informed sources, part of Japan's purpose in this is to become the world's foremost producer of instruments and machinery used for basic scientific research. Japan is making a \$4 billion commitment to this end, with half of the money coming from the private sector and the other

half from the government. The policy is already beginning to pay off, as Japan has developed top-of-the-line diagnostic equipment which U.S. manufacturers turned down.

Japan's domestic economic policy centers on high-technology retooling to increase productivity, and giant infrastructural projects, also designed to increase productivity. In the latter category, Japan is building an \$8 billion airport in the middle of the Osaka Bay. A highway and rail bridge will connect the mainland to the airport. The five-year project will upgrade Osaka into a full-grade international city.

Japan has also called for a "historic turn" in its relations with Southeast Asia. Hajime Tamura, minister of international trade and industry, said in Bangkok that Japan will provide billions of yen to develop industrial interdependence with Southeast Asia. "The Japanese are coming to us instead of us going to them and asking them for investment . . . giving us a bargaining power we never had before," said Staporn Kavitaanon, deputy secretary general of Thailand's Board of Investment.

Austerity

Argentine labor hits IMF policies

"No more lies, no more unemployment, no more hunger, no more misery, no more International Monetary Found," read a poster issued by the Peronist-led labor federation of Argentina, the CGT, in the streets of Buenos Aires on the eve of a general strike. The poster portrayed former economic minister José Martínez de Hoz (1976-81) with a mask—the face of the new economic minister, Juan Sorrouille.

Martínez de Hoz is infamous in Argentina for dictating IMF economic policy under the military dictatorship.

The CGT demands for the strike are: a moratorium on the \$50 billion foreign debt and new wage negotiations between workers and employers.

The strike will amount to a referendum on IMF policies.

Briefly

● **THE U.S. HOUSE** of Representatives in mid-January approved a \$91.6 billion bill to continue federal highway and mass transit construction programs through 1991, despite White House objections that the projects were too costly. The legislation passed by a vote of 401-20. The bulk of funds is for highway construction and repair, with \$21.2 billion set aside for mass transportation.

● **JAPANESE INVESTORS** may invest \$10 billion in U.S. real estate in 1986, said marketing expert Sanford Goodkin, chairman of the Goodkin marketing firm, in mid-January. In 1984, the Japanese acquired only \$600 million worth of U.S. properties. Prime real estate in New York is around \$350 a sq. ft. as compared to \$8,000 in downtown Tokyo.

● **THE ISRAELI** government, unions, and employers reached agreement in mid-January on a new austerity package, including a 10% devaluation of the shekel and government spending cuts of more than \$300 million. The agreement involves cuts in subsidies, including those on basic foods, and higher health and education charges.

● **SAUDI OIL** Minister Hisham al Nazer, the highest-ranking Saudi official to visit Moscow since the two nations broke diplomatic relation 40 years ago, met on Jan. 20 with Soviet Foreign Trade Minister Boris Aristov to "discuss Soviet action to assist OPEC in raising the price of oil," according to the London *Financial Times*. A spokesman for the Kuwaiti embassy said that Nazer will have three days of talks with Aristov, officials from the State Central Planning Department, and other agencies.

● **THE MEXICAN** automobile industry collapsed by 40% in 1986, according to Miguel Villicana, the general manager of the Chrysler of Mexico plant in Ramos Arizpe, in the state of Coahuila.