

Time to Deliver?

Then those who were thrown out of the fancy planetary meetings should be let in again.



Full transcription of the "last minute" addition to the **Opening Session**.

20:15 Guest speaker
Jan Spreen, France

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first thank you for being present here tonight. I see a packed auditorium and, each time I pause, I hear a deafening silence emphasize your attention. Agreed, that silence might simply be the result of the fact that you don't yet have the slightest idea of what the following short talk reserves.

To ensure that nobody will give in to the temptation of leaving before I have come to the end of my speech, a black box containing some precious gifts has been mounted under each seat. The precious gifts, I repeat, *the precious gifts!*, will be yours at the end of the session, after I have left the stage, when an individual secret code will be shown on the sixteen digits display at the front of each black box.

It may be funny to mention here that at first the idea of the organizers was to make a box explode each time a person gets up from his seat and tries to get away before the end of the presentation, but this practice of violence has been

discarded as being too hazardous for people on neighboring seats.

Dear audience,

Who could have painted my surprise when I read the invitation to stand here tonight as one of the speakers during the opening session of the huge planetary event which is the XVI International Aids Conference? To mingle, among others and all by my little self, with Chief Bryan Laforme, Mark Wainberg, Peter Piot and, last but maybe not least, Bill and Melinda Gates.

Of course, surprise was quickly followed by total disbelief and even some thigh slapping. But then, after triple reception of five double confirmations, came fear. Fear, with the big F. Naturally. Who am I to measure my personal convictions with those of the thousands of eminent scientists, politicians, journalists, researchers, bankers and whoever else I did not mention, physically present here tonight, and with those of the untold millions who will tune in on radio and television and read detailed reports in newspapers all over the globe?

My first reaction was to turn out the lights, lock doors and windows, cut telephone and modem cables and hide away in my bed under stacks of blankets, until the 19th of August 2006. But this I could not do, mainly because in summer temperatures rise to over 40°C where I live. So I decided to try to be strong, grasp the undreamed of occasion with both hands and try to write an amazing text that will make you reconsider.

Before we start diving to the bottom of the trench, two questions await attention and should be answered first:

Q₁ — Why me?

Q₂ — Why now?

Question one is finally quite simple to answer and, on close inspection, it does not need as much attention as one would have imagined in the first place:

Q₁ — Why me?

A₁ — Because I cannot possibly force any of the originally programmed speakers to say what I have in mind.

Question two, on the other hand, is very tricky and at first I was tempted to wave it away with a mere *I have no idea!*

But, after all, such an answer is the mark of laziness and cowardice so I thought I might as well propose the most plausible answer we could possibly think of.

Q₂ — Why now?

A₂ — Because yesteryear's parents have become today's grandparents.

Some of you will react with a sigh of relief and say to themselves: *Yes, of course. How strange the thought didn't occur to me spontaneously!* Others, who may not immediately understand the full meaning of answer two, will be given a more concise explanation during round questioning, thus providing many with a second reason to sit still and listen to the bitter end of the following.

After those preliminary remarks, we can now freely access the playground of the discussion in which we will try to better understand why medical science is still so thoroughly entangled in a strange battle against a retrovirus named HIV, some twenty-five years after the first discoveries of what was later called AIDS, the Acquired Immunity-Deficiency Syndrome.

A strange seemingly everlasting battle indeed, because, after all, huge 21st century medical science against tiny, tiny HIV, doesn't that sound like some struggle that shouldn't last too long? Some kind of totally unbalanced fight in which HIV's chances to survive more than say a month should logically be next to the well known snowball's chance in hell? A struggle

compared to which the heel of my shoe against an ant leaves huge chances of survival to the ant?

Human intelligence against a *virus* and the virus still getting away with it after 25 years of total war? I admit that nothing should be excluded a priori but something in this decades lasting battle of *man against virus* has kept me wondering for years.

I first started to wonder the day I remembered a laboratory scene — it must have been some 30 years ago, I guess — during which fellow students and I were busy to culture bacteria in Petri dishes. Well, let's say that the other students were very busy while I was mostly thinking of getting back to my guitar and let out that famous fugue in A-minor bouncing around in my head. My lack of concentration resulted in my Petri dishes remaining sterile compared to all the other ones. The assistant told me later that I had completely messed up environmental conditions and that in my Petri dishes the initially introduced samples of microorganisms must have felt like a whale at noon in the middle of the Sahara during the month of August.

Whales are rarely seen in the Sahara, even at night during the winter months, and they do not grow well in such places. But they can be seen not so far up North, in the Mediterranean, where they do feel at ease. Simply because environmental criteria prior to successful whale culturing are met.

My absent-mindedness during laboratory activities tends to indicate that bacteria do not create favorable culture conditions all by themselves and a well cooked diner in a neatly laid Petri dish seems to be essential to the desired growth curves my fellow students were chasing so passionately. Thus microbial growth apparently not creates but rather follows physical conditions.

Health is a condition. Disease is a condition. How does one get from one condition into the other?

A child coughs. A century ago people thought: "The kid caught a cold". Today we think: "The child got infected with a virus."

The child's little sister gets away with it without any dripping nose or coughing at all. What do we think? "Better immunity system".

It's all so perfectly simple and logical: Germs are the cause of dripping noses and bad coughs and if the cause is left without effect, it's just because immunity conditions were different initially. We say. Yet, strange enough, although *better immunity* refers to a condition, very few stand up to say:

Deterioration of immunity is a condition prior to the effects said to be caused by microbial infection. So, logically we should ask ourselves: What causes the changes of immunity? Why don't we also try to find out how to prevent those changes instead of investing all our energy in the fight against the bad germs which are, at most, the cause of secondary effects, deterioration of immunity being the primary one.

All of you who are not yet fast asleep think at this very moment:

What are you talking about, you dummy? Cold weather deteriorated the immunity system, germs did the rest. So what's the big deal?

That's what you just thought, don't try to deny, I know it for sure. Also because that is exactly what I wanted you to think. And even, if the idea hadn't occurred to you before I brought it up, you think about it now. Now, while we're at it, we might as well linger and give it a closer look. Although your thought does not accurately reflect reality because neither low temperatures nor germs are the primary cause of a cold, let's try to keep things simple and presume that the idea referred to above is the whole truth:

Cold weather deteriorated the immunity system, germs did the rest.

Then I ask you the question: to keep your child from catching a cold, what comes first: warm clothes or germ killing drugs?

Well, you all know the answer to that one so I propose to jump to the next paragraph where mind blowing ideas await us all.

Say we have a gusto to compare avian flu with a cold. Now, a cold is, according to your simplistic thought expressed above, caused by cold weather followed by an attack of germs. And thus, we are immediately up shit creek with our comparison because the equivalent of the cold weather, I haven't seen or heard it mention anywhere since the media started to inform the whole world about the unavoidable attack of the H5N1 killer virus.

If germs themselves cannot create initial conditions for successful culturing, something not yet clearly specified must precede avian flu before the H5N1 virus can feel at home in the affected host. We just found out that, in the fight against colds, warm clothing comes first, not pharmacy. So why do I only hear about Tamiflu and the like when people talk about fighting the avian flu?

Well, what the heck. Nobody came here to listen to a story about poultry diseases, firstly because the announced pandemic is of course one of the most ridiculous scams in human history, and, secondly, because we're here to talk about other things. So let's try not to get lost worse than we already are and stick to the HIV/Aids topic that unites us here today.

At this point, I would like to know if the audience constitutes a representative sample of the scientific community. I propose to proceed by round of applause. Ready?

How many so-called Aids denialists do we have here tonight? Aids rethinkers, how many of you? ... Come on, clap your hands. ... Must be some of you here tonight. Come on!

None !

Well, in that case I don't have to ask how many Aids apologists we have here tonight because we already know: All of you.

That's not what I would call a representative sample of the scientific community. How very disappointing.

You know, I accepted the invitation to stand here tonight mainly because I thought it was a great opportunity to do some fooling around with the denier dummies, make them look ten times worse than the fools you already know they are and, in doing so, become one of the favorite spokesmen of the "War on AIDS" promoting society. Also because I know that that's where the money is! But I hate to make fun of people behind their backs so my initial plan to make fun of the Aids denialists is not applicable, none of them being present here tonight.

What shall I do?

There's only one option. Fooling around with Aids denialists being out of the question, I will make Aids apologists look ten times worse than the fools they don't know yet they are. Hmmm. I like that idea. It's one against many but I have a microphone and alone I can easily be ten times louder than all of you together. Besides, the very, *very precious gifts* awaiting under your seats will only become available as long as you keep quietly sitting down on that seat.

Aids apologists. Aids denialists. According to the apologists, HIV is the cause of AIDS. Denialists say it is not. Officially, the apologists' group houses all the serious and trustworthy scientists and otherwise respectable persons, while the group of the denialists is considered as a desperate gathering of the fools, the charlatans, the ignorant and the blind. Which is a very interesting clear cut separation in itself so let's again hang around for a while and think it over.

If you say: *HIV is not the cause of Aids*, people almost always immediately answer: *ignorant!*

Now, isn't that quite an amazing application of the word *ignorant*? I mean, the single person in the world who doesn't hear or read, at least 186 times a day, the generally admitted certainty that *Aids is caused by HIV* must be that one and only eighty-five years old, blind and deaf-mute hermit, living since

1953 in an abandoned igloo on an isolated iceberg floating around somewhere in the Arctic Sea.

Anybody else saying: *HIV is not the cause of Aids* cannot possibly say that out of ignorance. He's a fool, or a clown or ... a very well read person who knows a couple of things that are ignored by the vast majority of the newspaper reading, radio listening and TV watching brain-washed population of the Earth.

Personally, I rarely feel the urge to call a person who expresses ideas opposing mine a fool or a charlatan.

If the expressed ideas seem to be unacceptable, I simply show that they are not my cup of tea and leave in peace.

If the expressed ideas sound funny, I happily laugh.

If the expressed ideas sound interesting, even if they also sound strange, I ask the person to replace my ignorance with knowledge and comprehension, after which I decide whether or not I want to store the new thoughts in my overall interpretation of reality.

HIV is not the cause of Aids

Is that an unacceptable idea? You may think it is, and, because no denialists are present here tonight, I know you all think it is, but, unless science comes up with satisfying answers to questions like how HIV causes Aids as well as with efficient Aids therapy, not one single alternative approach should be discarded, especially now that twenty-five years of medical research hasn't got anybody anywhere. Don't try to protest, you won't get away with it. *Forty million infected, zero cured.* You've said it yourselves.

HIV is not the cause of Aids

Is that a funny idea? It is? Well then, give in to that uncontrollable spasm of the zygomatic muscles, slap your thighs, sit back and relax to be able to carefully listen to a

couple of ideas that are desperately trying to find a way into your brains.

HIV is not the cause of Aids

Is that an interesting idea? Of course it is, seen the achievements of AIDS research after 25 years of global war on HIV! So let's presume that, because *you* are the audience and *I* have a microphone, it is my destiny to replace ignorance with knowledge, as it is your destiny to sit still and listen, after which you must decide whether or not you want to imbed some newly acquired ideas into your overall appreciation of reality.

To be honest I must admit that, intellectually spoken, the mere concept of a virus that causes a break down of the immunity system, thus becoming the mother of diseases, is a brilliant move in itself, a pure stroke of genius. Indeed, comparable to the cold example above, many pathologies are only diagnosed in patients with poor immunity defenses. But as long as immunity breakdown can be avoided by wearing warm clothes and swallowing a good portion of grandma's delicious vegetable soup, there is no glamour, fame or money at all in it for medical science and pharmaceutical industry.

HIV majestically deals with this uncomfortable situation and some twenty-five years ago an absolutely unbeatable version of the — *Cold weather deteriorated the immunity system, germs did the rest* — formula has been brought into life:

HIV deteriorates the immunity system, germs do the rest.

What coats? What sweaters? What grandma's vegetable soup? This is a chemical compounds' job solely! Culture conditions are set by germs so that other germs can grow. I can go home to play the guitar, come back tomorrow and find beautiful cultures in perfectly clean Petri dishes I didn't even care to take out of my drawer.

The world is changing. AIDS, SARS and Avian Flu clearly show that germs are threatening to take over global control and from now on the only possible way to face health care is with truck loads of chemicals.

Is that a funny idea?

I don't think it is.

The world is changing. AIDS, SARS and Avian Flu clearly show that germs are threatening to take over global control and from now on the only possible way to face health care is with truck loads of chemicals.

Is it that an interesting idea?

Well, if you plan to make a lot of money over the back of badly ill people or if you are convinced that overpopulation is a major hazard that can only be overcome with genocide, it certainly is a very interesting idea. In all other cases it is not.

Looking at my stopwatch, I see I'm way ahead of schedule. So I propose to jump back in time and pick up the Q_2A_2 enigma that must by now have become an unbearable obsession to most of you, and explain the underlying idea of answer two. Explanation which, in fact, also contains the bottom line of this presentation.

Q_2 — Why now?

A_2 — Because yesteryear's parents have become today's grandparents.

The HIV/Aids nightmare started in say 1981. Today is 2006. 25 years have passed by. This quarter of a century corresponds to approximately one generation. Thus, many parents of 1981 are grandparents today.

More often than not parents, especially fathers, are very busy building careers and earning money and, even if they love their kids, they do not have much time to spend with them.

Grandparents are in a different situation. Professional passion and obligation are growing thin and grandchildren are often infinitely more interesting than books and TV-movies.

Grandparents have time not only to love and worship their grandchildren, they also have time to observe them.

That cute six years old little boy. One moment he's the brave knight fiercely facing terrible enemies and dragons with a plastic sword. One moment later he's sitting on the couch with a teddy bear in his arms, thumb in his mouth. Sometimes he seems to be so fragile, so lonely, so lost in a big, big world. It breaks grandfather's heart. And it makes him think of all the other kids in the world, all basically the same.

— *What kind of society have we prepared to receive them? —*, grandfather thinks. — *A society controlled by profitable concepts that suggest germs might soon be in charge? A society where truckloads of killer drugs are disguised as health care? A society where medical genocide is the preferred method to control world population?—*

Yesteryear's father is sitting in a rocking chair facing the couch where grandchildren perform heart breaking scenes.

— *I am a hypocritical bastard —* today's grandfather thinks. — *I look at a child who has full access to everything a child can desire. And I become sentimental. Why don't I have similar feelings when I see pictures showing children dying of starvation? Pictures of a mother carrying her dead six month baby, victim of the Nevirapine screw up? We do research and say: look how much we care, look how we try to save lives! But, when it really comes to it, we don't give a fuck. Because, if we really cared, we wouldn't be able to see those pictures because of the eye-filling tears. If we really cared, we wouldn't send them truckloads of killer drugs, but shiploads of food and clean water providing equipments and whatever else they really need.*

— *I am a hypocritical bastard* — yesteryear's father says to himself. — *Germs taking over global control. That is a concept inspired by greed. Only to be believed by the mentally disturbed and addressing intellectual dwarfs. It is a concept that can only be kept alive through huge planetary indoctrination of a world population that simply cannot believe that they are so thoroughly misled by the leaders in all domains. I look at my hands. What have I achieved? Nothing. The day I will be the richest man in the cemetery, this dead baby's mother whose picture I'm looking at will still be shedding tears.* —

Yesteryear's parents often had no time or energy left to sit back and meditate, to observe kids and watch them live their lives. But today's grandparents have. They reconsidered. And they agree:

Germs do not create condition. They follow changes in condition.

Think it over and put some energy and time in an attempt to unravel the enigma of disease starting from the above hypothesis. Many people you call denialists and charlatans are already well on their way following that thread. As are many of yesteryear's parents and former members of the Aids apologists' community.

They reconsidered and they asked me to tell you about their thoughts. They hope that you will also start to reconsider soon. Soon, meaning: many years before the year 2006+25 has slipped into the past.

I thank you for your attention.

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