

THE BATTLE AGAINST HIV-AIDS WILL CONTINUE FOR LONG TIME

FEB 19, 07. The elimination of AIDS seems unlikely says the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease. Dr Anthony Fauci says HIV is transmitted (*primarily*) by sexual activity, which is a fundamental component of human behaviour, "so it isn't going to be easy to shut it off."

It may be possible to battle HIV into a low-rate of infection, he said, but it will take a long time.

Now that drugs are available to keep HIV in check in infected people, AIDS does not hit the headlines very often, and public fatigue in hearing about AIDS contributes is helping to create apathy to the message of prevention. And it is a grave mistake to think the drugs eliminate the virus.

Dr Fauci, a longtime AIDS researcher, estimated that one in four Americans with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, do not know they are infected.

Currently there are 40,000 new HIV infections in the United States, and 4,300,000 million new infections around the world, **each year.**

Current treatment involving a triple-drug can reduce the amount of virus in the system sharply, but it cannot eliminate the disease. Sooner or later, Fauci says, resistance to drugs will develop.

The three-drug treatment is now being used in parts of Africa.

Several new drugs are in the pipeline, some aiming to block fusion of the virus with human immune cells, and others, to prevent the virus from maturing.