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Washington Times

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SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 2001

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Sexologist behind report

Surgeon general's adviser an authority on gay behavior

By Cheryl Wetzstein and Julia Duin
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Surgeon General David Satcher's new report on sexuality, which got a thumbs down from the White House, was drafted by an internationally known authority on homosexual and transgender practices.

Eli Coleman, a senior adviser to Dr. Satcher, directs the University of Minnesota Medical School's program on human sexuality. He also is the outgoing president of the World Association for Sexology (WAS), an organization devoted to promoting

the "scientific" study of sex worldwide.

Mr. Coleman supervised the contents of the report, which were sure to raise hackles in the Bush administration by offering a tepid appraisal of abstinence education while castigating Americans for "anti-homosexual attitudes." Those attitudes, the report says, lead to depression, suicide and lower self-acceptance among homosexuals and "transgendered" individuals.

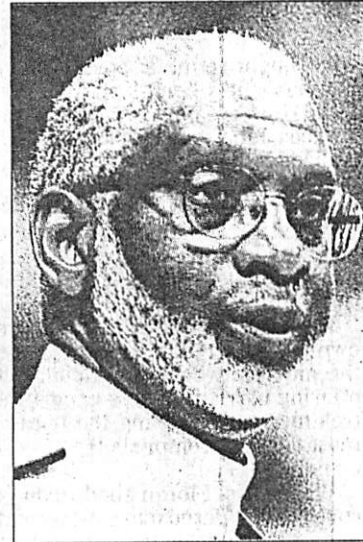
White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer said that, as of yesterday morning, President Bush had not

read the Dr. Satcher's report, "Call to Action to Promote Sexual Health and Responsible Sexual Behavior."

The report — 16 pages long, not counting notes — was released Thursday. It called on Americans to address high rates of sexually transmitted diseases, abortion, rapes, HIV infections and child sexual abuse via a "mature and thoughtful discussion about sexuality."

Dr. Satcher said such a dialogue must aim at "finding common ground" based on respect for "the

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Surgeon General David Satcher

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diversity of sexual values within any community."

President Clinton appointed Dr.

Satcher as surgeon general, the nation's chief health officer. But even his administration had doubts about the document, Mr. Fleischer said.

"The previous administration made some judgments about the merits of this report and made a

decision that it was a report that they did not want to come out at a time when the previous administration, at least, was running for office," Mr. Fleischer said. "[They] must have seen something in this report that made them delay it."
Infighting within the Bush admin-

istration further delayed the report. That disagreement is one reason Dr. Satcher is not expected to be reappointed after his four-year term ends in February.

Mr. Coleman has said he knew the Satcher report on sexual behavior would anger many, but it had to be done.

"It may not satisfy everybody," he told the Dallas Morning News earlier this month. "We've got to be able to bring people together and not just have this as an endorsement of one side's position on this issue."

Mr. Coleman is highly regarded in some quarters for leadership on issues of human sexuality.

"I think he's a wonderful role model of a research scientist who also sees the importance of advocacy," Debra Haffner, former head of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, said in an interview last year with the Minneapolis Star-Tribune.

Detractors view him differently. Tom Pritchard, of the Minneapolis-based Minnesota Family Council, said Mr. Coleman is "the vanguard of the sexual revolution, which has unleashed a wide range of destructive forces in American society."

Mr. Coleman's human sexuality program at the University of Minnesota "promoted some of the most outrageous behavior and activities," Mr. Pritchard said. He cited an event for transsexuals and transvestites that was held at a local homosexual bar.

Mr. Coleman has a doctorate in psychology and has worked on sexuality issues for more than two decades. He specializes in research on homosexuality, bisexuality and transgenderism. He has written widely on homosexuals "coming out." He is the founder and editor of the *Journal of Psychology of Human Sexuality* and the *International Journal of Transgenderism*.

Under his leadership in 1999, the World Association for Sexuality adopted an 11-point "Declaration of Sexual Rights," which asserts all people have the right to sexual freedom without coercion or discrimination based on sexual orientation, age, race, class, religion or disability.

People should have the freedom to make reproductive choices and have access to comprehensive sex education and sexual health care, the declaration says.

The WAS declaration "is sort of a manifesto of the sexual revolution—no holds barred, anything goes," Mr. Pritchard said.

New York psychotherapist and author Edward Eichel takes issue with Mr. Coleman's 1989 statement that sexual behavior "is primarily a sex act and the sex of the partner is of secondary consideration."

This viewpoint undermines support for heterosexuality, marriage and laws that prohibit sex with children, said Mr. Eichel.

Mr. Coleman's many honors include a Distinguished Scientific Achievement Award from the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality and the Richard J. Cross Award for Sexuality Education from Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.