

powers.

The toughness of the team, however, can be no surprise to the Russians. They have made up their minds to deal with Mr Reagan's second administration even though they have no reason to expect any significant change of stance. If they are as keen as they say to talk the US out of the SDI they will presumably have thought of some potent inducement — perhaps the "deep cuts" in strategic missiles which the US has consistently advocated. In theory the SDI is still an infant which can be strangled at birth. In practice, though, there is enough division of expert opinion about its prospects to encourage Mr Reagan to nurture it, and the defence contractors are making oodling noises. It will be a year or more before the US feasibility reports are in. Perhaps that is when the talks will begin in earnest.

## Aids and a caring society

GUARDIAN LEADER  
21/01/85

Hold the hysteria. The Royal College of Nursing suggests that there could be a million cases of Aids in Britain by 1991. But the history of epidemics suggests that a disease's ability to replicate itself eventually abates. In America the numbers are no longer doubling every six to eight months. Further, a method of controlling the virus and discovering its precise mode of transmission may be achieved within the decade. Teams in Paris and the US claimed at the weekend to have identified the genetic structure of the virus.

Because the disease is particularly, though not exclusively, prevalent among male homosexuals there has been, . . . , an attempt to portray Aids sufferers as agents of foul contagion, with Aids itself a nemesis for the promiscuous. But Aids is not exclusive to homosexuals at all, and not all those who contract the disease can be categorised as promiscuous. But the problem is a serious one. Short-term, calm forecasting estimates that there will be some 400 people in Britain who will have contracted Aids by December 1985; so planning and co-ordinated responses are necessary. The Department of Health has been too leisurely and too complacent — on both counts — so far. It must ensure that all Factor 8, the bloodclotting agent for haemophiliacs, is heat treated to destroy Aids virus; and that all special clinics, treating sexually transmitted diseases, must be required to display notices warning the chief groups at risk from Aids not to give blood. It is by blood that the virus is carried.

The Department should also make it obligatory for all centres where blood is given to display similar warning notices. It will have to accept, too, that there will be a need for more acute hospital beds in London for Aids sufferers. It would be impractical and money wasting to send them out of town.

Practical steps to respond to a constrained, but real threat. And steps — moreover — that might beneficially be accompanied by wider recognition that the male homosexuals who are bearing the main brunt of a cruel and dreadful disease need all the support and understanding that a supposedly caring society can provide.

## Open secrets in the Falklands

Back to the curious—and mendacious—matter of

therefore, face greater problems than its European partners in maintaining a stable exchange rate, even if domestic economic policies have converged.

The EMS may currently seem like a paragon of stability in an uncertain world — only seven realignments so far — but this is largely due to the fact that potentially strong currencies like the Deutschmark have been held down by the overwhelming strength of the US dollar.

If the confidence in the dollar does eventually wane, then the DM is likely to be a prime beneficiary. Whether the weaker currencies in the EMS could match the ascent of the DMs doubtful.

Joining the EMS would be little more than a short-term expedient. Its longer-term consequences would be to surrender domestic policy objectives to the caprices of the international capital markets.

The odds are that we would end up with more exchange rate "crises" rather than fewer. — Yours John Sills.  
130A Haverstock Hill,  
London NW3.

## Eye lash

Sir, — With reference to the axing of Eastern Eye (Letters, January 12) I don't know what all the fuss is about. As far as I'm concerned it was just another "white" programme, but with Asian faces. Perhaps Western Eye might have been more apt. Where there has been no gain, how can there be a loss? — Yours sincerely,  
(Miss) Permjit Dhoot.  
Preston, Lancashire.

other considerations indeed. If accepted, we get rid of a gr that are equal enforce; take evasion or, for racial violence January 17) examples.

One has the u that once again lobby has tri 80 mph is acce 90 or 100? I MPs, and espe tion MPs, had est in enviro lems and in could I be wr (Prof) Leslie E London N10.

## Miscell

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## Osmosis of the



Hugo Young

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WHEN Mrs Thatcher changes her mind, the world stands still. The spectacle is scarcely credible. The Opposition assembles all the deri

Thus Sir All perhaps the counsellor in O convert from