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At the 6th International AIDS Conference in 1990, protestors angry about the federal policy barring visitors with HIV from entering the United States boo DHHS Secretary Louis Sullivan.

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Angry Crowd Boos Secretary of Health & Human Services

ANDREA MITCHELL, anchor:

Garrick, in San Francisco, on the closing day of the International AIDS Conference, Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan appeared, looking for a truce from Administration critics. Well, he didn't get it. Science correspondent Robert Bazell is standing by there in San Francisco.

Bob, that must have been quite a session.

ROBERT BAZELL reporting:

Well, it was certainly rowdy for a while, Andrea. There have been demonstrations here all week, but nothing disrupted the conference until today. But Secretary Sullivan came representing the Bush Administration, and the protesters simply weren't going to let him speak.

Sullivan arrived for the closing session under heavy police protection. While he sat on the podium, other speakers summarized the scientific progress of the meeting. Many of the top scientists wore red arm bands as a silent protest against Bush Administration policy that bans people infected with the AIDS virus from entering the US. And while Sullivan listened, the head of the International AIDS Society announced that these meetings would not be held in the US again unless the policy changed.

Dr. LARS KALLINGS (Sweden): At this moment, we should look forward and continue to push for travel restrictions to be rejected in all countries.

BAZELL: Finally, conference chairman Paul Volberding introduced Sullivan.

Mr. PAUL VOLBERDING: In the spirit of the--of the conference, I welcome the Honorable Lewis Sullivan, Secretary of Health and Human Services.

BAZELL: Hundreds of demonstrators surged forward. They blew whistles, sounded horns, and shouted slogans. At first Sullivan sat impassively, then got up and delivered his scripted speech.

Mr. LEWIS SULLIVAN: We must learn to listen to each other, to learn from each other, and to work together.
BAZELL: No one in the auditorium heard the speech above the roar of the demonstration. The protesters threw wadded papers and coins at Sullivan. A few tried to cross the barricades guarded by hundreds of riot police. There were no arrests. After finishing his speech Sullivan left, and the Sixth International AIDS Conference came to an end. Despite that ending, there was--most of the delegates who came here, Andrea, think that this was a successful conference, where a lot of information was exchanged. Andrea? MITCHELL: Successful, Bob, but how much progress can they really make with the Administration still opposing their demands?

BAZELL: Well, the demands of the protesters, of course, are not always the demands of the scientists. The scientists are making a lot of progress in the lab. But the protesters believe the Reagan Administration and the Bush Administration, from the beginning of the epidemic, have not provided the leadership that could bring this epidemic to an end much quicker.