



## HIV/AIDS CRISIS IN INDIA U.S. Must Make Disease Priority In Bilateral Relations

WASHINGTON, Feb. 12, 2004 – Within a few years, India will have the largest number of people infected with HIV/AIDS in the world and the United States must make HIV/AIDS a priority in bilateral relations according to, *India at the Crossroads*, a new report by CSIS.

**India At A Crossroads:  
Confronting the HIV/AIDS Challenge**

[http://www.csis.org/saprogram/0401\\_hivindia.pdf](http://www.csis.org/saprogram/0401_hivindia.pdf)

**Louis Sullivan**, cochair of the President's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and former U.S. secretary of health and human services; **Michael Merson**, dean of public health at the Yale University School of Medicine; **Teresita Schaffer**, director of the CSIS South Asia Program; and **J. Stephen Morrison**, director of the CSIS Africa Program and the CSIS Global Task Force on HIV/AIDS, will outline findings of a January senior-level mission to India and release the report during a Capitol Hill conference today from 11:45 A.M. to 1:30 P.M., in the Rayburn House Office Building, room 2237.

"The Indian government estimates that 4.58 million individuals, or slightly less than 1 percent of the adult population, are infected with the HIV virus," the report states. "The number of actual positive cases registered is only about 60,000, so most of the people living with HIV do not know that they are infected. This report will be the beginning of a continuing dialogue with the key people and institutions involved in fighting AIDS in both India and the United States." Among the report's recommendations:

- The U.S. government should make a strategic decision to deepen its engagement on HIV/AIDS in India by making India eligible for funding from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief;
- The United States should strengthen professional relationships between Indian experts and their counterparts in the United States, including those in the Indian military;
- The United States should work with India to bolster AIDS prevention
- U.S. businesses should join their Indian counterparts in moving from verbal support to action against AIDS;
- The United States should apply to the epidemic in other parts of the world the lessons from India's unique experience in dealing with AIDS in a huge and democratic country.

"India's strategic relationship with the United States and its role in a violence-prone region, make its future especially important to the United States," said Schaffer. "AIDS is one of the principal question marks hanging over India's future, and acceleration of the spread of HIV/AIDS will have potentially disastrous consequences for U.S. strategic interests."

*CSIS is an independent, nonpartisan public policy research organization.*