

# **Global AIDS and the Bush White House: *Kind Words, Broken Promises***

*A Health Gap Briefing Paper on a Presidential AIDS Initiative  
for the White House trip to Africa January 13-17*

November 26, 2002

*“The global devastation of HIV/AIDS staggers the imagination and shocks the conscience. The disease has already killed over 20 million people and it's poised to kill at least 40 million more... The wasted human lives that lie behind these numbers are a call to action for every person on the planet and for every government.”<sup>1</sup>*

*George W. Bush, June 2002*

*“No serious work whatever is under way within the government to link annual budgetary allocations with the international development goals the United States has endorsed. For example, the Bush administration has failed to produce even one credible document spelling out America's role in a global-scale war against AIDS.”<sup>2</sup>*

*Jeffrey Sachs, October 2002*

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<sup>1</sup> “President Promotes New HIV Initiative” White House release, June 20, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey Sachs “Weapons of Mass Salvation”, The Economist, Oct. 24, 2002.

## I. Overview

**U.S. Role:** Since the very beginning of his administration, President George W. Bush has identified global AIDS as a critical issue. However, he has yet to commit the power and the prestige of the presidency to funding the limited programs he has supported. Using the opportunity of the White House journey to Africa scheduled for Jan 13-17, President Bush should make use of the resources at his command as the leader of the world's superpower to lead a global initiative to stop the AIDS epidemic that is decimating the globe. By then end of January, a compassionate President Bush must announce a bold new Presidential AIDS Initiative. This initiative must provide at least \$2.5 billion new dollars for global AIDS spending yearly, funding and personnel as needed to implement a World Health Organization call to treat three million people by 2005, policy changes to make generic essential medicines more widely available in developing countries, and a comprehensive effort to halt transmission of HIV from mothers to children.

With a credible U.S. commitment on the appropriate scale, President Bush should then seek to enlist other nations and the private sector to take part in a truly united effort through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Bush Administration must commit at least \$1.2 billion to the Global Fund in 2003.

**Status of the Pandemic:** Forty million people worldwide are living with HIV. Ninety-six percent (96%) live in developing nations, with seventy-one percent (71%) in sub-Saharan Africa alone. More than a third (38%) are under the age of 25.<sup>3</sup> Only 250,000 of the six million clinically in need of treatment have access.<sup>4</sup>

In October, the U.S. National Intelligence Council reported that, without a significant new global response, a second wave of HIV infections will overtake China, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria and the former Soviet Union countries, leading to a global burden that could surpass 100 million cases by the end of the decade.<sup>5</sup> President Bush and senior American officials say that fighting global AIDS is a priority of the highest order for the U.S., and that more resources will be made available to take successful programs to a global scale.

**Status of Funding:** Experts from UNAIDS and the WHO Commission on Macroeconomics and Health estimate that at least \$14 billion is needed yearly from donor countries to mount a credible response to AIDS worldwide.

The Bush Administration's proposals to date fall drastically short of what is needed to fight the spread of this disease. The new Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, launched at the White House last year, called for \$7-\$10 billion yearly but has been starved of the resources it needs. The Fund's Secretariat reports facing bankruptcy by the end of the year.<sup>6</sup> Next year's round of Global Fund grants are in immediate jeopardy of being shelved.

On Wednesday Nov 20, Congress shelved the Kerry-Frist bill to fight international AIDS. The bill would have authorized \$4 billion over the next two years. Lost is a major opportunity to fully fund the Global Fund, and mount a coordinated global effort to stop the spread of AIDS and care for those affected.

Now that Congress has failed repeatedly to make contributions to stop the global health catastrophe, all eyes are on President Bush. The Administration holds all the cards.

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<sup>3</sup> UNAIDS, *AIDS Epidemic Update*; December 2001.

<sup>4</sup> UNAIDS, *Report of the Global AIDS Epidemic 2002*; July 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Global Fund News Release, "The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria Says: Additional \$2 Billion Needed Next Year to Fund AIDS, TB and Malaria Programs"; October 11, 2002.

<sup>6</sup> Global Fund Financial Prospectus, October 2002.

**Call to Action:** President Bush is scheduled to make his first trip to Africa on January 13-17.

Health Gap, with 300 NGOs from across the country and from every continent, is calling on the President to act.<sup>7</sup> Bush should announce a Presidential AIDS Initiative next month to sharply increase funding, make policy changes necessary to fight the epidemic on a global scale, and enlist the support of other governments.

Administration officials from political staff and cabinet level officials are involved in feverish negotiations to devise a new White House AIDS initiative to be announced by the time of the journey to Africa. Some within the Administration are attempting to seize this political moment to launch a bold new plan to control global AIDS. Tragically, too many indicators are pointing toward a modest repackaging of existing programs with perhaps a few small increases. The march on the White House on November 26<sup>th</sup> is intended to demonstrate broad popular support for a bold new AIDS initiative. In addition to demanding major new programs, the activists will demand the Administration avoid a repeat of the embarrassing announcements before the World Conference on Sustainable Development earlier this year, where numerous existing meager programs were announced as if something new was being brought to the world's impoverished.

## ***II. Global Fund***

On May 10, 2001, President Bush hosted UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria at the White House to announce the formation of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. According to the Secretary General and data submitted by World health experts, \$7 to \$10 billion a year is needed to mount massive prevention programs, reduce mother to child transmission, and care for the 40 million people living with AIDS.

By including communities affected by AIDS, TB and Malaria at every level of the decision making process, as well as seating an equal number of donors and recipient countries at the table, the Global Fund represents a completely new model for international assistance. In a remarkably short time, the Global Fund has created an innovative, demand-driven model where country-level grant applications are created and submitted by consortia of public and private sector NGOs, government officials and organizations representing people with AIDS, TB and Malaria.

To date, \$2.1 billion has been pledged to the Global Fund over five years. At a current \$250 million (out of a promised \$500 million), the United States is the largest single donor.<sup>8</sup> When measured as a proportion of wealth, however, the United States is out of step with more generous contributions. Rwanda's inaugural contribution of \$1 million is ten times as generous as the United States contribution, proportionately.

Because of a cash crunch due to donors failing to fulfill pledges made, current obligations for grants already awarded may go unpaid. And based on the growing capacity of countries to expand effective programs, the size, scope and complexity of applications to the Global Fund are projected to continue to increase dramatically. These urgent country-level initiatives will be stillborn without new and sustained funding.

"The current situation requires a substantial front-loaded capital investment to scale up existing efforts," said Prof. Richard Feachem, executive director of the Global Fund. "The programs are ready. Any delay now will be

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<sup>7</sup> "The Push for a Presidential AIDS Initiative," <http://www.healthgap.org/WAD.html#pai>; November 2002.

<sup>8</sup> Global Fund Pledges to Date. Available at: [http://www.globalfundatm.org/files/Financial\\_contributions\\_011002.htm](http://www.globalfundatm.org/files/Financial_contributions_011002.htm)

measured by millions of lives lost and billions of dollars of additional cost to later respond to the expanded epidemics."<sup>9</sup>

President Bush has recognized from the Global Fund's inception that a multilateral, coordinated effort is necessary to fight the spread of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. He has called U.S. commitments to date "a down payment."<sup>10</sup> It is past time to mobilize resources and political will commensurate with the scale of the problem.

### **III. The Present Approach is Not Working**

In addition to funding problems at the Global Fund, the current, scatter-shot U.S. approach on bilateral aid and on intellectual property protections in trade agreements suffers from lack of active Presidential.

On June 19, 2002, President Bush announced a new five-year U.S. initiative to prevent mother to child transmission of HIV in a successful effort to derail a bipartisan vote to contribute \$700 million to the Global Fund immediately. Bush said the MTCT program would include \$500 million in new money<sup>11</sup>, spread over five years. After derailing the larger effort of Senators Durbin and Specter, and undercutting Senator Jesse Helm's efforts to secure \$500 for MTCT in 2002, the president then vetoed the FY 2002 supplemental appropriations bill containing the first \$200 million of his own proposed program. Portions of the \$200 million were folded into a number of FY 2003 appropriations bills now stalled in Congress, but a year has been lost already.

Last year's agreement at the World Trade Organization to allow poorer countries to get sustainable access to essential generic drugs is being actively undermined by the U.S. Trade Representative in multilateral trade negotiations at the WTO and in bilateral and regional trade negotiations such as those involving the Free Trade Area of the Americas and the South African Customs Union.

The next three months have several decision points which will likely set the Administration's AIDS policy for the remainder of President Bush's term:

Congress must pass a 2003 budget for the current fiscal year (January, at this rate).

The President will make his budget request for FY 2004 (February, with most work finalized in January).

The WTO, under heavy pressure from the U.S. Trade Representative, is coming down to the wire on a deal which will determine whether poorer countries get truly sustainable access to essential generic drugs (December).

The President is scheduled to go to Africa in January.

President Bush will have to choose between his expansive rhetoric and his administration's dismal record.

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<sup>9</sup> Global Fund News Release, "Additional \$2billion needed Next Year to Fund AIDS, TB and Malaria Programs", October 11, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> White House News Release "Remarks by the President and President Mbeki of South Africa"; June 2001.

<sup>11</sup> White House News Release "President Promotes New Mother and Child HIV Prevention Initiative"; June 2002.

#### **IV. A Presidential AIDS Initiative**

Without the power and prestige of President Bush committed to a truly global effort against AIDS, efforts are doomed to fail. A broad coalition of 300 citizens' groups on six continents has called on President Bush to announce a new Presidential AIDS Initiative to control AIDS in advance of his trip to Africa. The full list of organizations is available <http://www.healthgap.org/WAD.html> - [pai](#) and included in this e-press kit.

The Administration's AIDS initiative must include new funding representing an equitable U.S. share of a comprehensive global plan. To confront the spread of AIDS on a global scale, it must be part of an international framework leveraging new money from other donors, and it must include the policy changes needed as much as funding.

A Presidential AIDS Initiative aimed at saving families, communities and countries should include all of the following:

##### **A. Adequate Financial Resources:**

- At least \$2.5 billion in new monies for implementation of global AIDS programs, as well as additional funds to fight TB and Malaria. At least 50% of funds for global AIDS programs must be allocated to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria.
- Insistence on comprehensive debt cancellation for impoverished nations facing an HIV/AIDS crisis, with support for locally-determined processes to ensure resulting savings are re-channeled to social needs, and so that no such country should spend more than a maximum of 5% of total government revenues from internal sources on debt payments or future loans.

##### **B. Access to Affordable Medication:**

- A commitment to funding and implementing an equitable percentage of a global plan to provide comprehensive treatment including antiretrovirals to three million people with AIDS by 2005 as called for by the WHO at the international AIDS Conference in Barcelona.
- Support for a limited exception to international patent rules (and in future trade negotiations) to allow the export of a broad range of affordable generic medications to poor countries where such factors as lack of production capacity and insufficient market size inhibit efficient local manufacture. The countries of the World Trade Organization agreed in Doha, Qatar last year to loosen intellectual property restrictions to allow countries to respond to public health emergencies such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The Administration should support implementing that agreement in the broadest way possible – and stop trying to undermine it. The WTO meeting December 10 and the Trade-Related Intellectual Property meeting December 25-27 afford the Administration opportunities to support wider access to essential medicines.

##### **C. Prevention Services and Support for Affected Communities:**

- Provision of medication to prevent transmission of HIV from mother to child, as well as treatment to sustain and enhance the quality of life for mothers with AIDS, with a commitment to an appropriate

US share of the goal of achieving by 2005, and sustaining thereafter, 80% treatment coverage of the estimated 2 million women with HIV who give birth each year globally.<sup>12</sup>

- A sustained, fair-share US contribution to support an annual global investment in comprehensive HIV prevention in low- and middle-income countries, as called for by UNAIDS and supported by Global HIV Prevention Working Group.<sup>13</sup> Such efforts should include effective economic, social, and public health strategies aimed at women and girls.
- Support on a global basis for community based care and support services to reach by 2005 80% of children orphaned or left vulnerable by the AIDS pandemic, in accordance with, at a minimum, the UNGASS goals for orphaned and vulnerable children.<sup>12</sup>

## VI. Conclusion

As President Bush said in May 2001, “This is one of those moments that reminds us all in public service why we're here. It challenges us to act wisely and act together and to act quickly. Across the world at this moment, there are people in true desperation, and we must help.”

The President has recognized the threat of AIDS, and the need for a global approach.

If not now, when?

### **Broken Promises: The Bush Administration's Record on AIDS**

**The Bush Administration is planning a Presidential AIDS Initiative, to be announced in concert with the planned White House trip to Africa scheduled for January 13-17.**

**More than 290 citizens groups have called for it, including: Health GAP, the Episcopal Church, Bread for the World and other religious, AIDS and antipoverty groups. Activists say it should include:**

**Money** – U.S. funding of at least \$2.5 billion a year, at least half of it through the Global Fund, which the President helped found. The Bush Administration should contribute funds and personnel as needed to implement the WHO call to provide comprehensive treatment to three million people with AIDS by 2005.

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<sup>12</sup> United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS) “Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS”; June 2001.

<sup>13</sup> Global HIV/AIDS Prevention Working “Global Mobilization for HIV Prevention: A Blueprint for Action”; July 2002.

**Medicine** -- Policy changes to make essential medicines more widely available as affordable generics.

**Mothers** -- a comprehensive effort to curb mother to child transmission and care for orphans.

To launch a credible U.S. commitment on the appropriate scale, President Bush should then seek to enlist other nations and the private sector to take part in a truly global effort.

**THANKSGIVING WEEK 2002** - Senior Administration officials are preparing a Presidential AIDS Initiative. It is unknown and undetermined whether this will be a global framework for action, backed by U.S. leadership and resources, or another attempt at “treatment by press conference,” that merely repackages modest existing programs.

#### **THE RECORD IS NOT ENCOURAGING:**

5/20/01 President Bush hosted UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria at the White House to announce the formation of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. According to the Secretary General, \$7 to \$10 billion a year is needed to mount massive prevention programs, reduce mother to child transmission, and caring for the 40 million people living with AIDS.

Promise: \$500 million. Delivered: \$250 million.  
Shortfall: \$2.5 billion **per year** less than needed from US.

11/14/01 US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick signs US onto WTO agreement to allow poor countries access to generic versions of essential medicines to treat AIDS and other public health crises.

Promise: Access to medicines. Delivered: Lobbying effort to prevent implementation.  
Shortfall: No easier access to essential medicines.

6/19/02 While derailing bipartisan Congressional proposals to contribute \$700 million to the Global Fund and \$500 million to stop mother-to-child transmission of HIV in 2002, President Bush announced a new U.S. initiative to stop mother to child transmission. The White House proposal would have included \$500 million in new money over five years, but Bush vetoed a supplemental appropriation for the first year's portion, and rolled the funds into a 2003 budget request, which is stuck in Congress.

Promise: \$500 million. Delivered to date: 0  
Shortfall: \$500 million less than promised.

*“And nowhere has Kofi's leadership and foresight been more important than in marshalling the international community against the biggest problem that we have on the face of the earth today, and that's the HIV/AIDS pandemic.”<sup>14</sup>*

*Colin Powell, November 2002*

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<sup>14</sup> Colin Powell, Remarks to UN Association of the US, Nov. 12, 2002.