



**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
JOHN McHUGH, NEW YORK
CHAIRMAN**

PRESS RELEASE

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**MILITARY PERSONNEL JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING
ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

Washington, D.C. --- The House Armed Services (HASC) Military Personnel Subcommittee and the International Relations Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations Subcommittee held a joint hearing today regarding human trafficking. Specifically, Members of Congress received testimony regarding the Department of Defense's (DOD) efforts to ensure that anti-trafficking policies are stringently applied and administered at DOD sites globally. Today's hearing was a continuation of congressional oversight on the topic and builds upon previous congressional action, including a joint HASC and Commission on Security and Cooperation (CSCE) issue forum in September 2004.

Chairman John McHugh (R-NY), who chairs the Military Personnel Subcommittee, commented on the fact that the Administration had issued a zero-tolerance policy for U.S. government employees and contractor personnel which was subsequently adopted by DOD.

"I strongly commend the Department of Defense for seizing the momentum set by the President and I am encouraged by the aggressive approach the Department has taken to combat trafficking," said McHugh. He also suggested that more can be done to ensure zero-tolerance for trafficking by military personnel, contractors and subcontractors.

Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations Subcommittee Chairman Chris Smith (R-NJ) noted that prostitution frequently fuels the trafficking of persons. "Our need to examine this problem in the context of DOD arises from the fact that prostitution has historically coexisted alongside large populations of military forces. This is a problem for all militaries – not just the American military," said Smith.

Ambassador John R. Miller, Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons at the Department of State, highlighted the efforts that are being made to prohibit global anti-trafficking. He cited Congressional initiatives that have spearheaded progress and lauded the Department of Defense for promulgating strict standards. "Trafficking goes on in every country of the world, and to some extent, every military in the world comes in contact with it. But I can truly say that, in my opinion, the U.S. military, the Department of Defense is *the* leader in the world today when it comes to undertaking efforts to combat trafficking in persons and abolishing slavery," said Miller.

Members of the subcommittees heard testimony and solicited input from representatives from both the Department of State and DOD. Gail McGinn, who is performing the duties as Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, described the DOD's efforts to train all military personnel serving overseas in human trafficking awareness. The training program includes an overview of trafficking, trafficking indicators, DOD's policy on trafficking and the legal provisions regarding trafficking.

"The emphasis of the training is to educate individuals to not support trafficking, even indirectly, by frequenting businesses or enterprises that could involve trafficking in persons," said Ms. McGinn. She also cited the "patronizing a prostitute" addition as a specific offense to the Manual for Courts-Martial as yet another step that DOD has taken to stem trafficking.

Colonel Robert K. Boyles, USAF, former Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting, Forces Joint Contracting Command provided his personal perspective on contracting practices in Iraq and Afghanistan. He related his initial days in theater where he was told by his chief of staff that "it was a top priority to ensure all personnel working for MNF-I enjoyed a quality of life acceptable to the US public.... The DOD has published contract language, to be included in all contracts, to ensure trafficking in persons is addressed irrespective of where work is being performed. Combined with effective enforcement measures, this language is a step in the right direction to providing a better quality of life for individuals providing services to our men and women in uniform."

Boyles, who left Iraq on June 13th, stated that the number of existing contracts that had been modified to contain the updated anti-trafficking language is probably close to 100 percent.

Members of the Subcommittees expressed concerns about reports of other countries actively engaging in trafficking activity. Ambassador Miller described instances of global trafficking activities as being disgraceful, but that U.S. congressional legislation had been instrumental in increasing awareness and inhibiting trafficking.

"There is reason for some hope. Several years ago, there were only a few hundred worldwide convictions of traffickers. In last year's report, we reported 3,000. This year, it's 4,700," said Miller. "Now let me tell you, that has got to be sending a messageThe media coverage is increasing worldwide and, of course, that leads to good things happening. So we should be angry, we should be concerned, we have to do more, we have to pressure, we have to push, but I think that what the Congress set in motion is starting to turn the corner."

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