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Rep. Christopher H. Smith, Chairman
Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Co-Chairman
For Immediate Release

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**Helsinki Commission,
House Armed Services Committee
Review Defense Department Efforts to
Combat Human Trafficking**

(Washington) - The United States Helsinki Commission and the House Committee on Armed Services will jointly convene an Issue Forum on Trafficking in Persons and the U.S. Military.

Enforcing U.S. Policies Against Trafficking in Persons:
How is the U.S. Military Doing?
3:00 PM
Tuesday, September 21, 2004
2118 Rayburn House Office Building

The Issue Forum will examine Department of Defense efforts to implement the zero-tolerance policy on trafficking in persons issued by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz in January 2004, in accordance with a National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD-22) on Trafficking in Persons issued by President Bush in December 2002.

Testifying:

Charles S. Abell, Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for
Personnel and Readiness

General Leon J. LaPorte, Commander, United States Forces Korea

Joseph E. Schmitz, Inspector General, Department of Defense

Ambassador John R. Miller, Director, Office to Monitor and Combat
Trafficking in Persons, Department of State

Dr. Sarah Mendelson, Senior Fellow, Center for Strategic and International
Studies

Martina E. Vandenberg, Attorney, Jenner and Block

In March 2002, Cleveland, Ohio's Fox Affiliate WJW-TV aired an investigative report indicating that U.S. troops in South Korea were patronizing bars and other establishments where women from the Philippines and former Soviet states were trafficked and forced to prostitute themselves.

In response to the report, Helsinki Commission Chairman Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ) and a dozen other Members of Congress wrote to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld requesting an immediate investigation into the veracity of the allegations as well as the appropriateness of the U.S. military's policies and response to prostitution and human trafficking worldwide.

Department of Defense Inspector General Joseph Schmitz subsequently conducted investigations in South Korea, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo and issued two reports assessing the U.S. military's policies and practices with respect to activity that might fuel sex trafficking and prostitution. The reports contain numerous recommendations for action by DoD, including recommending a new department policy on trafficking.

In January 2004, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz issued a policy directive on human trafficking stating, in pertinent part:

"[I]t is the policy of the Department of Defense that trafficking in persons will not be facilitated in any way by the activities of our Service members, civilian employees, indirect hires, or DoD contract personnel. Following the policy set by the Commander-in-Chief, DoD opposes prostitution and any related activities that may contribute to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons as inherently harmful and dehumanizing."

Wolfowitz's policy directive outlined four specific objectives, including anti-trafficking education requirements for all service members and DoD civilians serving overseas and the incorporation of language into DoD contracts for services overseas reflecting such trafficking-related prohibitions.

The Issue Forum will assess the Department of Defense anti-trafficking policy in the context of findings and recommendations in the Inspector General's reports and examine the implementation of the January 2004 directive. The Defense Department's implementation efforts will also be examined within the context of overall U.S. Government policy and efforts on combating trafficking in persons. Particular attention will be given to current efforts by United States Forces Korea and the State Department to address trafficking of persons.

This event is part of the House Armed Services Committee's Issue Forum series. Issue Forums are designed to provide members of the committee with the opportunity to discuss current matters of relevance with government officials, selected experts, scholars and opinion makers in an informal setting.

An un-official transcript of this Issue Forum will be available on the Helsinki Commission's web site, www.csce.gov, within 24 hours of the event. Additional information on Helsinki Commission initiatives relating to trafficking in persons is also available at www.csce.gov.

The United States Helsinki Commission, an independent federal agency, by law monitors and encourages progress in implementing provisions of the Helsinki Accords. The Commission, created in 1976, is composed of nine Senators, nine Representatives and one official each from the Departments of State, Defense and Commerce.