

## DoD Personnel Face Stricter Rules on Human Trafficking

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American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Jan. 10, 2006 - Harsher punishments for Defense Department personnel who participate in human trafficking or support the industry by patronizing prostitutes are part of a bill signed into law today by President Bush.

"Human trafficking is an offense against human dignity, a crime in which human beings, many of them teenagers and young children, are bought and sold and often sexually abused by violent criminals," Bush said at the White House before signing the bill. "Our nation is determined to fight and end this modern form of slavery."

The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 amends the military manual for courts-martial, making the punishment for using a prostitute the same as that for being a prostitute, said John Awtrey, director of law enforcement policy and support for the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

Under the new act, any servicemember convicted of patronizing a prostitute can receive a dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances and one year of confinement.

Prostitution is being targeted because it is the main fuel for the human trafficking industry, Awtrey said. Human trafficking is the illegal practice of procuring human beings for unpaid work in physically abusive settings and locations from which they are not allowed to leave.

Whether people realize it or not, most women involved in prostitution are there against their will, he said, and supporting that industry - even by going to a strip club or bar that allows prostitution - supports the worldwide human trafficking industry.

"If you spend money there, you're giving money to the traffickers, and traffickers are criminals," he said.

Many people don't understand the human trafficking industry, so DoD has established a new training program to clarify what it is and what the implications are of becoming involved, said Robert Wisher, DoD's director of advanced distributive learning.

The training was developed early last year and can be taken in a classroom or online, Wisher said. The training covers four basic areas:

- U.S. and DoD policy on human trafficking;
- The origins of the trafficking phenomenon;
- Detection of trafficking; and

- Legal provisions of trafficking.

The overall goal of the training is to change people's attitudes about prostitution and human trafficking and make them realize the victim's side of the story, Wisher said.

"We change attitudes through gripping stories based on actual accounts of what the victims go through," he said.

The training is mandatory for all servicemembers, DoD civilian employees and contractors who are going overseas, Wisher said. Later this year, it will become mandatory for all military members and DoD civilians, he said.

DoD also is developing a separate training module for commanders about what to do when incidences of human trafficking are reported and a module for investigators about how to handle the reports, Wisher said.

Human trafficking became an important issue for DoD because of the many military units that are stationed overseas in countries where human trafficking is rampant, such as Korea, Awtrey said.

"Our primary focus is overseas because of the number of units and personnel that are in countries that are high-demand destinations for trafficked women in the sex exploitation industry," he said. "We want to educate people on what it is so they know what to stay away from or what to report."

It is too early to judge the ultimate success of the training program, Wisher said, but he said he already is receiving positive feedback from servicemembers who said the training opened their eyes to the problem of human trafficking.

Human trafficking is the third-largest source of money for international organized crime and occurs internationally and within the United States, Wisher said