

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR JAMES M. INHOFE, RANKING MEMBER
OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE ON EAST
ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS**

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing on human trafficking in Asia. The existence of human trafficking in any part of the world should be of utmost concern to the United States. Our action -- or non-action -- in combating these practices is a reflection upon our nation's deepest and most cherished values.

The State Department's 2010 *Trafficking in Persons Report* reveals that East Asia is home to some of the world's most pernicious trafficking rings. Three of the countries in this region, Burma, Papua New Guinea and North Korea, were awarded a Tier 3 ranking in the State Department's report, indicating that they both fail to meet minimum international standards for combating trafficking and are not making significant efforts to comply with these standards. Sadly, the vast majority of other states in Asia, while making some visible efforts to improve, also fall short of these requirements. Only two countries in this expansive region, Taiwan and South Korea, fully satisfy these basic, internationally accepted standards, and I applaud them. Today's hearing is most fitting as there is much that needs to be done.

The reports we hear from Asia are disheartening. As those assembled in this hearing likely already know, no single ethnicity, gender or nationality is immune from the destructive impact of trafficking. Yet, unfortunately, some states are clearly more negligent in their conduct than others. In Burma, the commercial sex trade and forced prostitution are rampant, children are unlawfully conscripted into armed service and compulsory labor remains a widespread and serious problem, particularly among ethnic minority groups. In Papua New Guinea, crime rings

and foreign businesses arrange for women to enter the country, only to bring them to logging and mining camps, fisheries, and entertainment sites where they are exploited in forced prostitution and involuntary domestic servitude. Men, too, are exploited for labor, where some receive almost no pay and are compelled to continue working for the company indefinitely through debt bondage schemes. These reports, and others like them, are commonplace throughout the region. From North Korea to Cambodia and Mongolia to Malaysia, few are left untouched.

A country of particular concern in this region is China. As it continues to grow in prominence as an economic player, we cannot turn a blind eye to the acts of coercion and human degradation there, which so clearly defines their communist regime. There continue to be reports that Chinese children are being forced into prostitution and labor, and many of these young laborers are the children of migrant workers. Some are as young as 10 years old. In November 2009, an explosion killed 13 such children while they labored at a fireworks facility in Guangxi Province. In Western China, reports tell of children being forced to pick cotton on army-sponsored farms under the pretense of a “work-study” program to receive “vocational training.” Finally, the commercial sex trade is also very prevalent, both within China and across its borders.

These accounts are only the beginning of the broader human rights abuses in China. During my career as a U.S. Senator, I have consistently fought for democracy, economic freedom, human rights and religious freedom in communist China. We must remain critical of the Chinese dictatorship and their disregard for the dignity and welfare of their own people. We cannot allow the prospects of economic gain distract us from the realities of the unjust governance there. It is my hope that someday soon, the people of China will have their own democratic “Chinese Spring.”

My hope today is that we can assess how to effectively address the global problem of human trafficking. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act has been an encouraging step in the right direction. Yet, there is always room for improvement. Perhaps, adjustments in the scope and focus of the State Department's work might yield even greater results within the department's relatively limited resources. I am anxious to hear the testimony of Ambassador Luis CdeBaca, whose experience in the Office to Combat and Monitor Trafficking will shed light on which initiatives have been effective and which might be better focused or revised. Further, I commend Ambassador CdeBaca's efforts in a cause that is worthy of our attention and action.

Thank you, again, Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing on human trafficking in Asia.