

Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on
East Asian and Pacific Affairs
On "Trafficking of Women and Children in East Asia
and Beyond: A Review of U.S. Policy"
Testimony of Director John Miller
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Department of State
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Thank you, Senator Brownback, for this opportunity to discuss the United States' efforts to fight trafficking in persons in East Asia. Let me start by thanking you for your visionary leadership in combating human trafficking worldwide, which you often say, is truly the modern-day face of slavery. As the recently appointed director of this office, which you helped establish through your landmark legislation, I look forward to working with you in this continuing fight to eradicate human trafficking worldwide.

I would like to give an overview of our anti-trafficking efforts, particularly regarding the East Asian and Pacific region. The focus in East Asia and Pacific is concentrated on the following strategies:

- Emphasizing the importance of continuing and expanding regional collaboration
- Engaging governments bilaterally to bring all possible tools to bear to encourage and assist countries in addressing their trafficking problem

To date, U.S. engagement on trafficking in the East Asia Pacific region has generated positive progress, but the countries in the region need to do much more. As you know, most of the countries in the region face serious trafficking problems. The good news is that almost all of these governments are aware of this transnational problem and seek cooperative solutions. The diversity of the region means there is no one-size-fits-all model for a response to the trafficking problem. Governments are at different points along the continuum in responding to this arduous task.

As noted, my office seeks to expand and encourage cooperation between and among neighboring governments. After working closely with the governments in the Mekong region, we have seen, for example, the beginnings of cooperative efforts between governments to ensure that trafficking victims are humanely treated and where appropriate, are helped to return voluntarily to their countries of origin.

Similar bilateral and regional cooperation is occurring as governments more fully recognize that trafficking in persons is a transnational crime. There have been positive practical responses by governments. Governments have begun to build capacity by exchanging law enforcement information, enhancing their ability to better challenge the international syndicates. For example, Thailand has begun taking measures to build a transnational law enforcement unit. This development has the potential to demonstrate the Thai government's long-term commitment to regional law enforcement. Also, such cooperation should help governments improve their own domestic law enforcement efforts.

The Government of Indonesia hosted the first Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime last year. The Second Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime will be held on April 29-30 in Bali. We support Indonesia's effort to confront trafficking issues in a pragmatic and results-oriented fashion, and we look forward to participating in the next conference as an observer. We consider this to be a positive opportunity to stimulate much-needed regional cooperation.

These are important steps forward, but many challenges remain. Generally, domestic law enforcement efforts, particularly "prosecutions" are the most problematic area in combating trafficking in the East Asia and Pacific region. We have communicated with a number of governments, including Thailand, Cambodia, and Indonesia, that much more needs to be done in this respect. We have emphasized that prosecution efforts, in addition to protection and prevention measures, are an important component in their tier placement on the annual Trafficking in Persons Report.

A related concern is that a lack of transparency and weak institutions are hampering the effectiveness of efforts to combat trafficking in some countries. We have expressed these concerns to our partners and are working vigorously to help them address these broader issues. We recognize that trafficking networks build up over time and will take some concerted long-term efforts to dismantle. We do not, however, see these systemic problems as an excuse for weak political will. In this context, we have clearly communicated to relevant partners that any complicity of public officials in trafficking must be addressed urgently.

Simply stated, we are engaged in a vigorous fight to eradicate trafficking in persons, which is a modern day form of slavery. Key actors throughout the region - government officials, activists and NGOs, and engaged citizens - are with us in this anti-trafficking fight, and we continue to expand our cooperation with these friends.

We have the assistance of some governments in the region, which like the U.S., are providing program assistance in the fight against trafficking. Like the U.S., they also face their own trafficking problems at home. For example, we are developing closer cooperation with destination

countries such as Australia, Japan and South Korea, in funding anti-trafficking programs in source and transit countries. Australia, for example, is spending \$6.4 million in the region to fight both human trafficking and child sex tourism. After a review of their trafficking projects in 2001, Australia developed a pilot program to build the capacity of South East Asian countries, coordinated through a workshop of representatives from sponsored countries, and including the U. S. Government as a participant. The six diverse components of the project range from boosting law enforcement capacity in Cambodia to an integrated early detection system in Laos.

During the 2002 fiscal year, the U.S. Government approved approximately \$11 million for anti-trafficking programs in the East Asia Pacific region during the 2002 fiscal year, with funds supplied from the Departments of State, Labor, and USAID. Of this amount, \$5 million came from the Department of State from INCLE, ESF and MRA funds. These programs were designed to improve the capacities of governments and NGOs to fight trafficking by assisting law enforcement, providing protection and assistance to victims, and bolstering prevention efforts. Such programs include helping the Government of Vietnam to develop a

national plan of action. Other measures include a program in Laos promoting education and awareness-raising on the dangers of trafficking in the villages; supporting victims' shelters in Vietnam; and, sending technical experts from the Department of Justice to train Indonesian police officials on investigating trafficking crimes.

There are impressive programmatic successes in the region, although much more needs to be done. In the Philippines, for example, the U.N. Center for International Crime Prevention created a National Coordination Project involving several components including a trafficking study, review of governmental efforts, and a profile development of trafficked women. The project addressed better coordination of governmental efforts so successfully, it has become a model for other countries in the region with a significant trafficking problem suffering inadequate national responses. The Department provided funding in FY2002 for this program to be reproduced in Vietnam.

Another example of program success in the region involves child victim advocacy and law enforcement in Thailand. With funding from the Department, the Asia Foundation administered 9 projects to improve the capacity of NGOs

addressing regional trafficking. One particularly notable Thai NGO is the Coalition to Fight Against Child Exploitation (FACE), which is in the forefront of efforts to secure convictions of traffickers and pedophiles. The Department funding helped FACE expand to include advocacy on behalf of Cambodian children trafficked into Bangkok. Additionally, since this funding, FACE was empowered to provide key data on prosecutions and investigations, previously unavailable.

As you know, my office leads preparation of the Department's legislatively mandated Trafficking in Persons Report, otherwise known as the TIP Report, issued each June. In compiling this report, my office will maintain its high standards of objective and fair reporting that is consistent with our role as advocates for victims. This year for the first time, those countries in Tier 3 of the TIP Report will face the loss of non-humanitarian and non-trade related aid absent a national interest waiver.

This is a good beginning, but it is only the start of a long-term effort. We must press for immediate action while assisting in promoting sustained regional and country strategies. Human trafficking is many insidious things. It

is a human rights atrocity. It is a transnational crime. It is an offense against human dignity. I look forward to working with you combating this scourge which is counted among the great human rights battles of our time.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.