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Special Briefing

**Office of the Spokesman**

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## On-The-Record Briefing by Ambassador John R. Miller, Ambassador-at-Large on International Slavery, on Release of the Sixth Annual Trafficking in Persons Report



(1:35 p.m. EDT)

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Thank you, Madame Secretary, Under Secretary Dobriansky. For those that want to follow up with questions afterwards, Mark Taylor our reports coordinator is in the room and Eleanor Gaetan from our office. Here we are in the 21st century and we're talking about slavery. Wouldn't this be a shock to our abolitionist ancestors who thought they finished the job back in the 19th century.

Yes, the slavery is different in some ways. Back then it was state-sanctioned slavery based primarily on color. Today it's not based primarily on color and it's not state-sanctioned, although sometimes governments look the other way. But the tricks of the slave masters are still the same: deception, fraud, beating, kidnapping, rape. And the challenge of modern-day slavery extends into every country in the world, including the United States of America.

Now this report -- which comes out every year at this time, which you have copies of -- this report is intended to put a spotlight on the issue, to give information about the issue, but mostly to inspire action, action to throw the traffickers in jail and free the victims.

I know from previous conferences most of the attention and the questions will be on country ratings, but I do want to take a minute, before we start, to turn to page 3 in the table of contents, because there is so much more in this report. Woven throughout the introduction, you will see and read stories of victims. In fact, this report is dedicated -- as you will see at the end in a letter composed by our staff, this report is dedicated to one such victim, Nour Miyati, a young Indonesian woman who went to the Near East as a domestic servant hoping to find money for her family.

I met with Nour Miyati in Riyadh. Nour Miyati, as you will see from the picture in the back, has missing fingers, missing toes; a victim of abuse, servitude, and torture. She is a reminder that while we talk about governments in this report and we talk about categories, in the end, this report is intended to be about individual human beings, the human beings that have suffered, the human beings that we don't want to see suffer in the future.

Now if you look at this index, you'll see, this year, for the first time -- well, not for the first time, but there's a lot more emphasis on it -- you'll see a lot of sections on labor trafficking, labor trafficking through legal recruitment, for example. And

you'll see a lot of descriptions of forced labor trafficking. Congress asked that we put more emphasis on this issue and we have this year and you'll see more emphasis in the narratives on it. You'll also see in that table of contents that there is a section on best practices, international best practices. That's important because we like to cite some of the things that are going on that really show how to end this. And we have best practices described from Malawi to Ecuador, techniques that governments are using that have proven effective, are proving effective in combating trafficking.

And you'll also see there is a section on heroes too, anti-trafficking in person heroes, heroes acting to end modern-day slavery. And we have nine or ten such heroes, people like Kyai Hussein in Indonesia, who has taken brochures and gone out into villages and, through the mosques, spread the word on how people can fight trafficking. People like Moussa Sow in Senegal, who has worked with the problem of child beggar trafficking in taking the lead in not only setting up shelters, but urging the government to take action. So those are some of the things you'll see in the report.

Now let's get on to an overview, the state of the world, the good news and the bad news. If you ask, "Well, are things better this year than last year," of course, the true test only can be found in the number of slaves. And as we know, there is no census taken. Slaves don't stand in line and raise their hands to be counted, given the underground nature of this activity. But if we look at some more general indicators, we see the start -- I say the start of progress. For example, you will see in our report, on page 47, regional law enforcement statistics. And what you'll see there is that while several years ago, there were just hundreds of convictions of traffickers, last year, there was around 3,000 convictions of traffickers worldwide. And this year, it's up to around 4,700. That is sending a message, or more of a message, anyway, and that is a good sign.

We don't have a count, but we know from our observation and I know from my travels around the world that more and more shelters are opening up to care for trafficking victims and that is a good sign. And we know that last year, 41 governments passed new anti-trafficking in person legislation. That's a good sign, too. And as the report brings out, there are some individual countries that have done remarkable things. If you look at the countries as a whole, there is a slight increase, a slight rise in the ratings overall. But you do see countries, as I mentioned, Malawi, 13 convictions of traffickers, country-wide programs to alert people, really stepping up, a tropical African country with limited resources moving into Tier 1. You do see Ecuador, that was on Tier 3 last year, moving up to Tier 2. Many investigations started, opening of shelter services, a first lady of Ecuador taking the lead. Those are some of the good things.

However -- there's always a however here -- one has to, I think, this year, give careful attention not just to Tier 3, but to Tier 2 Watch List. Tier 2 Watch List was set up by Congress just a year or two ago. And the "W" not only stands for watch; it stands for worry, it stands for warning. A government that is on the Watch List is barely on Tier 2 and certainly, without significant efforts in the coming year, will fall to Tier 3. And we see three major countries that are on the watch list again from previous years. I refer to -- excuse me, four major countries: India, Mexico, China, and Russia. This has to be a source of concern.

And then we see some new countries that have dropped from Tier 2 to Tier 2 Watch List: Malaysia, South Africa, Indonesia, Brazil. And this is not good news. Some countries that were in Tier 3 moved up. Others, such as Saudi Arabia, remained on Tier 3. Our hope is that all countries, all governments will move up from Tier 3, move up from Tier 2 Watch List. But this is a long struggle and it's a struggle that, just like the struggle centuries ago, is going to take a great deal of perseverance, a great deal of cooperation. And we hope this report, coupled with the efforts of our embassies abroad, coupled with the efforts of our congressmen and senators, our President, our Secretary of State, our office, we hope that those efforts will help across the world and in the United States to lead towards the abolition of modern day slavery.

Okay, enough of that. Let's turn it over to questions. Fire away. Yes.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Ambassador, what bothers me after going through the report as far as India is concerned, what kind of steps have you taken with Indian Government? Are they doing something to end this child labor or modern day slavery in India?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** The question -- let me just repeat the question in case people in the back didn't hear. The question was a general question about India. And I think the question was, in essence, what is the problem.

Now, India, the Government of India, has taken some steps in the area of sex trafficking. They deserve credit for that. But I just visited India two or three months ago and the chief challenge in India is the lack of action on what we call bonded labor slavery. For those of you who don't know what bonded labor slavery is, this is a situation where a grandfather may incur a debt from an employer, gets them to come to work at a rice mill or a brick kiln. The son then continues working to pay off the debt. The grandson continues working. Not allowed to leave the mill or one person allowed to go shopping. If they leave, tracked down, beaten. I met with survivors of such a rice mill when I was in India.

Now, India, to give the positive side, has a good law on this, a law that prohibits this and even provides compensation. And

India is our friend and a great democracy. However, I could not find an example while I was there of one owner of such a rice mill or brick kiln that had gone to jail. And I did engage with the Indian Government and some government officials were concerned. Some said, oh, it is a very small problem. But when I met with NGOs in India, this is not a small problem. Some government officials in India think this involves hundreds, but I will tell you ILO, NGOs, others think this involves hundreds of thousands and millions. And it relates basically to the caste system because if you look at those in sex slavery or bonded labor slavery, they are predominantly of the lower castes.

Okay, next question. Yes, Teri.

**QUESTION:** Ambassador Miller, isn't it so that the sanctions have been waived on all the Tier 3 countries consistently since the rankings began? And if I recall correctly that that's true, is it time to stop waiving the sanctions when you have so many countries remaining on Tier 3?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Let me repeat your question. The question was: Is it true that the sanctions have always been waived on Tier 3 countries and isn't it time to have more sanctions?

No, it is not true the sanctions have always been waived. Sanctions have been applied, were applied last year in the cases of Cambodia and Venezuela and the year before in Equatorial Guinea.

It is true that the way the law is written, the way the law is written, Congress provided three months after the report came out that a country on Tier 3 could undertake significant efforts to move up and the Secretary would then make a recommendation to the President. And last year some of the countries that were on Tier 3 moved up, and that's the purpose.

In other words, it's not only the publicity, or you might say shame or embarrassment; the threat of sanctions is a factor here. Now, come September, those countries that haven't moved up will have to consider the President is authorized to consider sanctions. You do have to remember that the sanctions relate to foreign aid and support at international financial institutions, and there are some countries that do not get a lot of foreign aid from the United States or need loans from the IMF or the World Bank. But this is a question that the President will have to face.

Let me go to the back. Go ahead. Yes.

**QUESTION:** Concerning the Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia in particular, I mean, these countries remain in Tiers 2 and 3, but is it because they are close to the U.S. that they don't get sanctions or that you tend to be lenient with them? Is it more political?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Well, I don't know that we've been lenient. Saudi Arabia is in Tier 3 but it's not -- as I pointed out, they don't go to the IMF or World Bank for loans and we don't give them any significant amount of foreign aid. They remain on Tier 3. The other countries that were on Tier 3 -- we placed several other Near Eastern countries on Tier 3 and some of them moved up to Tier 2 Watch List. Tier 2 Watch List, as I said, is not a very good rating.

But I will -- let me point out -- give an example of why some of those countries moved up. The UAE was moved up from Tier 3 to Tier 2 Watch List. It was moved up because the United Arab Emirates freed almost a thousand victims of child camel jockey slavery and helped repatriate those victim survivors to South Asian countries, worked with UNICEF in setting up a shelter for victims. These were significant efforts and they deserve to be recognized. And the purpose of this report is not just to say, oh, you're bad; it's also to say, hey, you've done some good things and we recognize them.

Now -- yes, go ahead.

**QUESTION:** Could you describe the circumstances under which some of the new countries have been added to Tier 3, notably Iran and Syria?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Yes, yes. The questioner noticed that two new countries have been added to Tier 3, at least two, but he mentioned Iran and Syria, the why. Syria was not on the report last year, was not rated. I think it was a special case. Syria, to its credit, they're starting some work with (inaudible) on some kind of training. But if you look at prosecution, protection of victims, prevention, there's nothing. There were no prosecutions of traffickers, let alone convictions. That's why the law emphasizes efforts on the three P's and so that's why Syria is in Tier 3.

Iran was in Tier 2 last year. They're in Tier 3 this year. I should start out by saying it is not easy to get information in Iran, but we have just -- we have received a number of reports that Iran imprisons or executes a significant number of trafficking victims. And one of the criteria in the law's protection of victims and the law specifically says victims should not be

punished for acts they commit after they've been trafficked, whether it's prostitution or anything else. And so Iran -- we hope this situation will change in the next year, but that is why Iran was placed in Tier 3.

Okay, I am getting to the far back here. Yeah.

**QUESTION:** I had a question about the section on DOD responding to labor trafficking in Iraq.

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Right.

**QUESTION:** Have there been any prosecutions of Pentagon contractors or subcontractors?

And if I could ask a quick second question, that is, on Germany. How worried is the U.S. about the possibility of increased trafficking for the World Cup?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Well, two questions. The first was on DOD, a Department of Defense response to the story at the end of 2005 about trafficking to Iraq. The story specifically involved trafficking of Nepalese workers through Jordan into Iraq and we have a specific page on that, page 19, what the Defense Department has done.

There was a lengthy Defense Department investigation. To answer the beginning of your question, there have been no prosecutions yet. This was a complicated trail involving recruiting firms in Nepal that had deceptive advertisements, other recruiting firms in Jordan that engaged in deception. In the case of these particular victims, they never even reached a contractor in Iraq. They were killed on the way in.

But the Defense Department in the last -- at the end of this investigation put out some very specific orders. One, that any contractor was responsible to see that workers had their passports. This is a very common technique of the traffickers: Grab the passports. That all contractors and subcontractors had to have a signed copy of the employment contract. That the subcontractors and contractors must be licensed recruiting firms. And that recruiting firms not charge employees illegal recruitment fees. All of these were alleged and I think in a very credible story.

Now, in addition, the Defense Department is in the process of having adopted a regulation that will follow up on the order that says these practices will not be tolerated. And when that regulation goes into effect, my understanding is they will then be able to take specific legal action against any traffickers or subcontractors. I think the contractors -- somebody has to bear responsibility. Even though there may be a long line, somebody at the end of the line has to be sure that those people that are working are there of their free will.

The second question you asked was about Germany and the World Cup. And I think you asked are we concerned about the World Cup. And the answer to that in terms of trafficking, is yes. This has become a big issue in Europe with Swedish ministers, a French soccer coach, the Irish Women's Federation, all speaking out. And the reason it's become a big issue is that there are reports of thousands of women being transported to Germany for sex during the World Cup. All of the research and evidence available shows that when you have large flows of women for sexual purposes, there is going to be trafficking. There is a link between prostitution and sex trafficking.

And so all these people I've mentioned have expressed concern. I have expressed my concern directly to the German Ambassador here. We have sent a letter to the German Ambassador. We have been also in touch through our embassy. So the German Government has said that they are taking measures to stop trafficking, so we will see what happens.

**QUESTION:** A follow-up?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Yes.

**QUESTION:** On Iraq Ambassador, is this the first time this report has included information that essentially there was U.S. taxpayer financing of trafficking in your report? And second, in addition, DOD is just a small part of the universe of bringing in third-country nationals into Iraq to do this kind of work. And the allegations I think go beyond DOD. What are you doing to make sure, for example, the embassy, the new U.S. embassy in Iraq is being built by a contractor that was implicated in trying to coerce third-country nationals to go into Iraq? What are you doing to make sure the State Department, USAID, other people, financing reconstruction efforts in Iraq also adopt similar measures?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** This is -- the first part of your question: Was this the first story? Yes, this December story was the first documented story where we saw a chain of people going through subcontractors into Iraq and so we got right on it. And the Defense Department got right on it. The second part of your question is -- I don't know all the specific steps that

will be taken by the State Department and other agencies. I do know this, that the Defense Department's approach was reported on at the last senior policy operating group on trafficking meeting. It has been praised by the White House and others. And I expect that this department, the State Department and other departments will do no less than the Defense Department has done to try to stop any trafficking anywhere.

Yes.

**QUESTION:** In the last report you spoke a little bit about the amount of people trafficked to the United States and found it a significant problem. Could you talk about the scope of the problem over the last year and if you have any statistics on what you're doing to combat that?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Sure. The question was about trafficking in the United States. And as I said at the beginning, this challenge of modern-day slavery affects every country and government in the world, including the United States of America. The questioner specifically asked about the figure in last year's report that said up to 17,500 men, women and children were trafficked across international borders into slavery in the United States.

Elise, unfortunately, we do not have an updated figure on that. That's the last figure we have. Remember, however, that figure of 17,500 was across international borders. That does not count internal trafficking. So there's a serious problem in the United States and that's why you have a tripling of Justice Department prosecutions over the last several years. That's why you have Department of Health and Human Services certifying 1,000 victims for assistance. That's why you have us discussing new approaches as to how can we get victims to step forward because in the United States -- this is true of every country in the world, but it is true in the United States -- there is a gap between the number of estimated victims and the numbers stepping forward. And we --

**QUESTION:** Can I just --

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** -- yeah.

**QUESTION:** -- just a quick follow-up? There's been a significant problem in terms of diplomats in the United States, whether World Bank organizations or at the United Nations, who are using trafficked workers with impunity. What are you doing to strengthen laws so that domestic servitude workers that are found to be in slave labor that these diplomats won't get away with that?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Well, if there are any cases, if you have some cases, please let us know. We will be in touch with the Justice Department and Consular Affairs immediately. I'll say this, you asked what we're doing about it, in an hour I'm having a meeting with representatives of all the embassies. Now the major purpose of the meeting is to introduce the report. But the other purpose of the meeting is to go over our anti-trafficking laws and to, once again, give warning that we expect these laws to be obeyed and we expect embassies to follow our law and we do not expect to find situations of trafficking.

Yes, the man with the paper.

**QUESTION:** Ambassador Miller, according to *The New York Times*, you are sympathetic to the Swedish model stop punishing prostitute and to crack down the customers. Do you mean this and how are you going to succeed? Do you prefer a puritanistic society?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Do I prefer what?

**QUESTION:** Puritanistic society.

**QUESTION:** Puritanistic.

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Oh, puritanistic. No, I don't think we have to have a puritanistic society. But it's interesting. First the question was about the Swedish model and I'll give a brief explanation that those -- that are not aware of it. Sweden several years ago decided that instead of punishing the women engaged in prostitution, they were going to punish the men and that meant not only the brothel owner, the trafficker, the pimp, but the customer, the buyer.

Now -- and our intelligence shows that while Sweden is not a puritanical society, that the amount of trafficking has gone down.

Now you asked about -- can I finish? Yes?

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible) carefully?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Now you asked about directions that can be taken. Several countries have started to move in the direction of Sweden. South Korea is one. The United States is another. Why do I say that? In the end of last year, the Congress passed and the President signed legislation. It was called End Demand legislation. It did not go all the way to where Sweden has gone. It did not decriminalize the women and just punish the men. But given that this is largely handled at the state and local level, what the law did is that for the first time, it authorized the Attorney General to give grants to law enforcement -- local and state law enforcement agencies in the United States that move towards prosecuting the buyers and it authorized the Attorney General to give grants to those agencies at the state and local level that are seeking to educate the "buyers."

This signifies a shift. If you look back anywhere in the world, you'll find, when you look at the sex purchases that have led to trafficking, it's always the women that get sent to jail and the man gets let off predominantly. That's been historically the case. That has been true years ago in the United States. That is starting to change. Local and state jurisdictions are starting to prosecute the men. You have jurisdictions like San Francisco that are not only prosecuting the men, but have set up schools to educate the buyers after their first offense. Those schools have been replicated in 15 cities. With these grants, I think you're going to see more of that activity.

I want to call on people I haven't called on. Yes.

**QUESTION:** Cuba and Venezuela, how long have they been on Tier 3? And in the case specific of Cuba, since the country doesn't allow inspections or anything, how could you do your report?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Yeah. Well, the question was about Cuba and Venezuela. You know, Cuba, if they took certain steps, would have a chance of getting off of Tier 3. And what steps are they? Cuba has a tourism industry, government-operated or affiliated. And it engages in promoting child prostitution, which is not only trafficking under our law, but under UN protocol, and it's done very openly. I'd like to see Cuba move to change that.

In the case of Venezuela, Venezuela did do some things last year. They held a conference on trafficking. There was some awareness training. The problem with Venezuela is they have never had an arrest, a prosecution, or a conviction of a trafficker. It is very hard to move a country up when you've said, "Please arrest, prosecute, convict one trafficker," and it doesn't happen.

Okay, let's -- yes.

**QUESTION:** The North Korean laborers in foreign countries.

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Yes.

**QUESTION:** Two question. Why this is important in terms of human trafficking and second, have you ever contacted those countries' government and appeal about this matter and if it is so, what were their reactions?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Yes, okay. The first part of the question related to North Korean labor in other countries and the second part of the question was, have I ever contacted other countries. We are concerned about the export of North Korean labor to other countries. We are concerned that there were reports from both the Czech Republic and Mongolia, for example, of North Korean workers being held in those countries doing work. The conditions may be better than in North Korea, but they are still -- the reports are they are still trafficking victims. They lack freedom. It's not clear they get any money, whether the money goes to them or the North Korean Government.

In answer to the second part of your question, yes, I have met with the DCM of the Czech Embassy to express my concern about several factories in the Czech Republic that appear to have North Korean labor. In addition, we're talking about forced labor. There's also the question of North Korean refugees that are trafficked in China and some of these are trafficked into China, some are trafficked after they get to China. A lot of them are trafficked to be brides, filling this imbalance that comes from this one child policy.

I brought up this subject with the Chinese Government, too. So we'll see what happens.

Yes.

**QUESTION:** On Iran, the U.S. Government may very well separate today's decision from the nuclear issue, but how realistic do you think it is that Iran could in some way use it as an excuse to pollute or cloud the nuclear issue?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Well, I'm not an expert on the nuclear issue and others in the Department are better able to answer that. All I know is that our President, our Congress, our Secretary of State want to report what's going on on slavery, and that's what we're trying to do here in this report. I hope there will be improvements. It would give me great pleasure if Iran next year could rise to Tier 2 Watch List or Tier 2.

Now, who haven't I -- yes, okay.

**QUESTION:** You talked a little bit about Cambodia, briefly about Cambodia's ranking?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Yeah.

**QUESTION:** But the other question I wanted to ask is about the numbers you have, the number of victims, because in Cambodia -- I don't know about other countries -- there's a lot of dispute over the numbers with NGOs -- no one -- you know, no one denies that this happens, but the NGOs have very, very high estimates and some independent researchers have them much lower. And does that -- are you looking at that dispute? Does that affect funding -- how much money you are sending to NGOs?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Well, the question was about Cambodia and does a dispute over number of victims affect funding. Well, indirectly maybe. But remember that once one has decided there is a significant problem in a country -- and believe me, there's a significant trafficking problem in Cambodia, I don't care how many thousands you're talking about -- this report focuses on the efforts, not the size of the problem. In other words, the primary emphasis is on efforts and I think that's reasonable. Congress wanted to know, okay, there's a problem, but what are you doing about it?

So Cambodia -- there's no question in part because Cambodia has a wealth of NGOs and Cambodia was one of eight countries on President Bush's special anti-trafficking initiative. Cambodia has received significant assistance to try to combat trafficking in persons.

**MR. CASEY:** Ambassador, we want to make this the last question.

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Okay. Oh my gosh, there's so many people. Yes. Did I call on you before?

**QUESTION:** No, sir.

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Well, then go ahead.

**QUESTION:** Thank you, Ambassador. This question will be on the Horn of Africa. And I see several countries in the different tier list, which is like Sudan is on 3, Tier 3, and Kenya on Tier 2 Watch List and Ethiopia on Tier 2. And what's the certain story on Ethiopia? And also I don't see Eritrea on the Horn of Africa on your list. Do you have any information on that, too?

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** You're saying you don't see Eritrea on the list?

**QUESTION:** Yeah. Sorry if I don't.

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** No, you're right. It's not there. There are certain countries where we either didn't have sufficient information or the government wasn't in effective enough control for us to evaluate. There are still -- it gets smaller and smaller, that list. It used to be like there were 70 governments in this report and now we're up to 149, but there are still a few.

Now, your question --

**QUESTION:** On the experience in Ethiopia because I see on Tier 2.

**AMBASSADOR MILLER:** Yeah, your question was about Ethiopia. And of course, just to define Tier 2 again for you, Tier 2 means they do not meet the minimum standards but they were undertaking some significant efforts. And their law enforcement response to trafficking improved. They did adopt a new penal code. They have been working with local

NGOs. There was some limited assistance to trafficking victims.

They need to do a lot more in increasing awareness. They're in the middle. But let me just wrap up by saying that when I mentioned the signs of progress and I mentioned, you know, the rise from 3,000 to 4,700 convictions and the shelters and the countries passing anti-trafficking laws, I left out one thing that's happened in the last year, and I think you know what it is. There has been a tremendous increase in stories in the news media. A tremendous increase. I don't know exactly, but anybody that watches TV or reads the papers knows this is true. I mean, there's one program after another. Even the dramas are incorporating this.

And I think this is in part responsible for starting to turn the corner. People, when they read about it, they're shocked. They say, "How can this be going on?" It doesn't matter what country. Somebody's, you know, middle class, educated, whatever. They think, "How can this be going on?" But once awareness starts, and it starts with the news media, then good things start to happen. They talk to their local police chiefs. They talk to their civic groups. They go to their churches or mosques. They talk to their parliamentary representatives. So I do think that that is also a factor and I thank you all for coming. And if you have questions later, I am going to be available for a few minutes and Mark Taylor, our report staff, and Eleanor Gaetan will be available also.

Thank you very much.

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