

**SLAVERY NO MORE 2012 GLOBAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE**  
**August 10-11 ~ LOS ANGELES, CA**

**KEYNOTE: Human Trafficking & Global Politics**

**Peter White:** We're going to focus these next two days as most of you know on both the domestic fight against human trafficking and slavery as well as international. Our next speaker is probably our first voice on the picture of fighting international trafficking. He has an incredibly distinguished career. I think he's worked for three presidents, Assistant Attorney General with the Department of Justice under Secretary of State Arms Control to serving as the United States Ambassador to the United Nations. Currently a Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, he has an incredibly unique and privileged view into the international picture of fighting human trafficking, so would you please welcome Ambassador John R. Bolton.

**John Bolton:** Thank you very much. It's a great honor to be here today and to have a chance to talk to you about this critical issue. It's for me something that I feel very strongly about that doesn't normally get addressed at the attention levels that it should in American foreign policy formulation. I really believe along with Mike Harwood whose work some of you may know about the importance of what Mike calls a *Wilberforce Agenda* in U.S. foreign policy in this century. He's got a long list. Human trafficking, internet freedom, refugees from authoritarian countries. I think it is important as a part of American foreign policy, and it doesn't get the attention that it deserves.

I thought it would be helpful to you today to talk about how the issue unfolds and what it tells us about the likelihood of success in stopping human trafficking looking at the various possible places to put some attention and resources. I thought first maybe it would be helpful to explain how I got myself involved and concerned about this issue given that my background is largely strategic arms control countering the proliferation of nuclear chemical and biological weapons and political military affairs. The answer really is precisely because of looking at the consequences of some of the key aspects of national security affairs and what they do to affected populations.

I have to say maybe the first and most dramatic for me was in the aftermath of Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 when we saw immediately massive refugee flows out of Iraq that should have been the responsibility of governments in the region and the United Nations but were not resolved satisfactorily. Even more massive refugee flows after the Iraqi's were expelled from Kuwait and Saddam in his customary fashion turned his wrath on his own citizens, particularly the Shia in the south and the Kurds in the north. When you consider the vulnerabilities of refugee populations, it's something I'm sure many of you have had concrete experience with.

It's difficult to describe in the abstract, but it was brought home to me in early 1991 when the Kurdish refugees, in particular, fearing attack from Saddam's troops moved up into the hills along the Iraqi, Turkish border. I accompanied Secretary of State Baker when we actually went a little bit inside Iraq. I called it the State Department invasion of Iraq when

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the refugee flows were just beginning. You could go and just see people standing on hillsides. No shelter, no sanitation, no food supply. It was a tragedy waiting to happen. The response of the U.N. agencies was certainly well meaning, but it was completely ineffective.

I remember after we were in Iraq Baker was doing other things that lead to negotiations on the Middle East peace process, but he said, *"I really think I better meet with the heads of the U.N., humanitarian agencies in Geneva,"* where many of them were headquartered. We set up a meeting at the U.S. mission in Geneva, and they all came in and explained to Baker what they were going to do, and it was very polite meeting and so on. It was clear they didn't have a clue what they were going to do although they all had plans, and they all needed money. We had a nice picture.

They left, Baker called me back into his office that we had set up for him in the mission and said, *"This isn't going anywhere. This is going to be a catastrophe."* A lot of work went into providing U.S. assistance and assistance from other countries. It was really the first time that we saw the potential impact of the U.S. military in delivering humanitarian assistance in massive amounts to the Kurds, the refugees in northern Iraq and into Turkey. It was for me a very graphic demonstration of people at their very most vulnerable. I learned more in this area when I was fortunate to be named to what was then the new U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom in 2001.

I served on that for about a year and a half. As we looked at a variety of cases of religious oppression around the world and the consequences of that one of our main focus at that time was on Darfur and the Sudan more broadly the North-South conflict, in particular, and the consequences that that had. All of this together with the fact that my wife had once been Washington Chief of Mission of the International Committee for Migration, dealing with migration and refugee problems, I think helped raise the awareness of vulnerable populations and their needs broadly speaking.

Where the human trafficking and sexual exploitation really came home to me was when I served our Ambassador to the United Nations at a time when U.N. peacekeepers were under considerable criticism for repeated documented cases of sexual exploitation and abuse by U.N. peacekeepers of the populations they had been sent to protect. Populations that in the aftermath of conflict are by definition some of the most vulnerable populations in the world, and the U.N. peacekeepers of course some years before had won the Nobel Peace Prize. They were kind of a shining example of a U.N. success in the middle of criticism for a lot of other problems like the *Oil for Food Program* in Iraq and other difficulties that the U.N. system had been having.

When I arrived in New York in the middle of 2005, there had just been published a report by a group that lead by Jordan's ambassador to the United Nations, Prince Zeid, on sexual exploitation and abuse which included trafficking by the peacekeepers of women and children in peacekeeping zones around the world. It was actually a very candid report which distinguished it among U.N. documents, because it talked about and gave specific

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examples of sexual exploitation by peacekeepers which by definition means you're naming the peacekeepers contributed by particular countries. That's always enough to get people's attention.

Prince Zeid's report I felt was a very positive achievement and gave us a factual basis on which to assess how to take corrective steps, because the obvious standard for U.N. peacekeepers ought to be zero tolerance for sexual exploitation or abuse or trafficking or anything associated with it and not just their own involvement but in conflict zones where they could see the trafficking was going on. Whether it was strictly within their peacekeeping mandate or not, it seemed to me to be something that they should be taking steps to stop.

As these things go in the U.N., time goes by and not a lot happens, but it got to be early 2006, in February, when by rotation in the Security Council it became the U.S. turn to be president. The presidency rotates every month alphabetically around the council's membership. So February 2006 which was our month, and I decided one of the things I wanted to do during the U.S. Presidency is hold some open hearings on problems in U.N. peacekeeping. I'd picked two issues, one was procurement fraud and the other was what we were doing about or not doing about Prince Zeid's report on sexual exploitation and abuse. My idea was sort of like congressional hearings. It would be in public session. We'd have the U.N.'s office of internal oversight services sort of like the Inspector General for the U.N. testify. We'd bring in experts. We'd all have a discussion about it and see if we could make some progress.

The reaction that I got when I talked to the other ambassadors on the Security Council on the sexual exploitation and abuse by the peacekeepers was essentially well you know we've talked about that once. Do we really have to talk about it again? I thought yes indeed, that's probably exactly what we needed to do, but there was real opposition, and there was particular opposition from Kofi Annan who was then the Secretary General. There was no doubt in my mind that we were going to expose more problems in the peacekeeping area. All kinds of false excuses for why we should do this were created, including that somehow this was the Security Council impinging on the turf of the General Assembly. At the U.N. whenever you don't want to talk about one issue, you find some other issue to talk about. That was one of the ways that it came up.

Where it got very personal and shows I think the intensity of opposition to really dealing with problems like this at the U.N. was at another traditional event. Each month the President of the Security Council hosts a lunch for the other members which Secretary General attends. Sometimes we discuss things that are significant. Other times, it's less important. We had our lunch before my two hearings on procurement fraud and sexual abuse. Kofi Annan without telling me in advance essentially ambushed the hearings, saying they were going to be counterproductive, and he was opposed to them.

Immediately, I think by prearrangement, two of the ambassadors said, *"Maybe we should hold these hearings in private."* I said, *"No I don't think we're going to hold them in private."*

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*The point is to hold the in public. We've announced it, and if we went back on that now that would cause more harm than going ahead." Kofi Annan's response to that was to say, "You're trying to intimidate me." If I had been it would have been more effective.*

That afternoon I called all the ambassadors, and I said, "Look we had agreed to this before and are you still agreeing to it?" They said yes indeed they had, and we went ahead with it. What happened was that Kofi Annan refused to allow the Under-Secretary General who headed this internal inspector general office from appearing in public. He wouldn't let her appear at the sexual abuse hearing, and he wouldn't let her appear at the procurement fraud hearing which would be if you imagine something like happening in congress of having a department saying well we're not going to let our Inspector General testify, you can imagine what the reaction would be.

What happened, although most of the members of the Security Council I thought made pretty serious statements about the problem of U.N. peacekeepers and sexual abuse and trafficking, nothing much more came from it. I left in December, and the issue disappeared. It pops up every once in a while, but essentially as the members had sort of indicated when I first raised it, we've talked about that before. We don't want to talk about it again. This is the U.N. dealing with a problem its agents, the peacekeepers, are creating.

Unfortunately, this problem of lack of dealing effectively with a range of problems in the humanitarian field, trafficking being one, I think cuts across a lot of U.N. agencies. The U.N. is very good at creating coordination units that are designed to supply effectiveness that its individual agencies don't come up with and it's created an office to coordinate humanitarian affairs. Did that about 20 years ago. That was so unsuccessful that ten years ago they created the position of Deputy Secretary General to coordinate efforts in humanitarian areas. They'll probably set up another in about another 10 years, because the earlier coordinators haven't worked.

There is an office in the U.N. called the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, headquartered in Vienna. I think they do some good work in some areas. It was set up at the instance of the Italians about 25 years ago and for the first two-thirds of its existence it was headed by an Italian which because of their own particular problems. It didn't really advance the agenda very much. I know its current head, a Russian, we've negotiated against each other in a lot of contexts over the years. He's a good honest man, but it's not a position. It's not an agency that has high priority in the U.N. system. Its efforts in the trafficking area are small. They may be affective by their own standards, but they're insignificant in the big picture internationally.

There are other examples of this as well. The U.N. has a body called the U.N. Human Rights Council which ought to be an agency that among many other human rights violations that it looks at should have it seems to be this contemporary form of slavery as a very high priority, but this is an agency. This is a decision making body that's been so highly politicized throughout its existence that it hardly deals with substantive human rights

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abuses. The predecessor, the U.N. Rights Commission, was so bad that everybody agreed that it had to be abolished and replaced by something that might actually be effective instead of spending its time passing resolutions, criticizing Israel and the United States as opposed to places like North Korea and Cuba and really get serious about human rights.

In 2006, we went through a big effort to reform the U.N. human rights decision making mechanism an effort that absolutely failed in my view. The reason why we voted against the new Human Rights Council in 2006. We didn't have one big reform that we proposed, but we proposed a series of procedural and substantive changes that we thought taken as an aggregate might make the new Human Rights Council more effective. One by one these reforms were stripped away because of complaints by third world countries and others until almost nothing was left.

I knew our effort had failed when the third world countries insisted, and our European friends agreed, that we would take out this provision. We had originally said that no country in the U.N. could be a member of the new human rights council if it was then the subject of Security Council sanctions of support for terrorism or human rights abuses. Doesn't sound terribly controversial to this group, I suspect, but it was controversial enough for the U.N. that it was removed as today we see Iran a proud member of the U.N. Human Rights Council while it conducts oppression of its own citizens.

That was the sort of thing that happens in the U.N. system that leads substantive issues to be lost under this sea of politics. It's something that I think should be instructive when people consider what role the U.N. should play in the trafficking issue, because it sounds like a very attractive place to address a global problem. Unfortunately that's not been the record. I didn't make this up purposely. I knew we were going to be here at this conference or that the issue would be contemporary, but we've now seen the U.N. Global Commission on HIV and the Law proposed. The legalization of prostitution because of their feeling that it would reduce HIV/AIDS difficulties if as they like to call euphemistically sex worker were engaged in a legal profession.

I'm not making a moral judgment here about this. I think this is a judgment that reflects a lack of understanding of what goes on in prostitution and human trafficking around the world. Its one thing for a group of middle class people who consider that sex work is something that the Mayflower Madam engages in for high priced customer in leading government institutions. That's obviously not the 99% of the problem in prostitution and human trafficking, but it is an example of how the U.N. Here you have people who are no doubt well-meaning and well intention, focusing on the HIV/AIDS problem but utterly missing the implications for a recommendation that they make that will have in other areas.

It's also, I think, part of how people's agendas can be advanced at the U.N. without others fully understanding what their up to. You may see this next month. Every September, for example, they have a process at the U.N. where they get heads of state and government and foreign ministers who come for the opening of the General Assembly to sign treaties and

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international conventions that their countries have not previously ratified. They have a special place that's set up, and people come and sign the treaties and so on. Then the Head of State will go out and hold a press conference and say very proudly, "*Today I signed three new treaties.*" Then the next guy will come out and say, "*Today I signed six new treaties.*" That's true. They certainly do, and they'll sign hundreds of treaties probably from different countries, and they'll all go back to their respective capitals and just ignore the fact that they've signed them.

You can see a lot of that I think across the board at the U.N. I fear as the example of U.N. peacekeepers demonstrated, it's particularly true in the trafficking area across the broad range of U.N. bodies and decision making institutions so that the lure of the U.N. as a place to get things done while I acknowledge that its very real, it is more a mirage than a reality. I think that the international problem of trafficking is also one that has to be address directly by the United States and others that are concerned about it in bilateral relations. It's one reason why it's not going to be successful at the United Nations. Just because somebody goes to the U.N. as an ambassador doesn't mean they suddenly become a plutonic guardian for the whole world.

There are 193 countries at the U.N. Every one of them pursues its national interest very vigorously. Only one gets criticized for it. That's us. That's part of the game, but everybody is looking out after their national interests, so in that kind of environment you can perhaps understand why things don't get done and why they need to be addressed in a more concrete context.

One example that to me shows problems of a wide variety but where the human trafficking and exploitation questions are very real is in the case of North Korea. One of the things that I think has become clear to me over the years is what we call the rogue states, the ones that I've spent so much time focusing on who are building weapons of mass destruction who aspire to weapons of mass destruction are threats beyond that as well. Almost invariably the rogue states not only seek chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons they are also state sponsors of terror, and they're also authoritarian oppressors of their own people.

North Korea is as good an example of that as any country I can think of. It's a 23 million person prison camp, and it hasn't gotten any better with the accession of the third hereditary communist dictator since 1945, the world's only hereditary communist dictatorship. Just think about that. What an achievement. The fact is the people in North Korea, deprived as they are of information, fully understand they're living in hell, and that's why more and more of them try and get out.

I've had the privileged over the past couple of weeks to be reading Melanie Kirkpatrick's new book called *Escape from North Korea*. It's not published until next month, but I'm writing a book review of it. She has spent years looking at this problem of people coming out of North Korea. Annually about 3,000 North Korean refugees, in recent years, have found asylum in South Korea, a few more in the United States and elsewhere. She looks at

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estimates of how many North Koreans are trapped inside China. Of course, there are no good estimates as you might expect, but people who have studied this question have estimated there may be as many as 500,000 North Koreans trapped inside China of whom 75% to 80% are women.

If you think about this problem that's been building up inside China, if there are 500,000 there and more are coming out of North Korea every year but only 3,000 are making in through China to Thailand or Burma or other countries in Southeast Asia where they can try and get asylum and get to South Korea or somewhere else, you've got not just a huge problem now but a growing problem. With 75% or 80% of these people trapped in China being women, there's no doubt that they are being trafficked or being forced to hide at risk that if they're ever discovered, they'll be handed back over to North Korean authorities where their per se guilty of crimes simply for having tried to get out of North Korea.

For those who are concerned with international trafficking, this is a prime example of how not just the evil of this slavery in and of itself but how it is so often part of a larger picture of evil doing. Melanie Kirkpatrick in her book calls China's role here in holding in effect these 500,000 people as "*another circle of hell*," and it is. What that means is that unless somebody addresses China very directly on this issue and in my view on the larger question of why over 65 years since the partition of the Korean Peninsula, Korea hasn't been reunited. This problem of the refugees and the trafficking and persons inside China and elsewhere is only going to grow larger.

It leads naturally to the question if we've got this problem in so many different aspects that all of you are quite familiar with. If we've seen a lack of effectiveness at the U.N. level what exactly are we supposed to do to deal with the international implications of trafficking in persons? Obviously through legislation over the years within the State Department, the office of Trafficking in Persons has been a locus of activity. I just want to share with you somebody who's been in the State Department in a lot of different capacities what problems I think that office faces and gives some suggestions of what we might do about it.

There are two arguments on an office like the Trafficking in Persons office. One is that if you don't highlight the problem for the Foreign Service and the State Department as a whole it's going to be ignored. There's a strong logic to that approach. The other argument though. The other side of the argument is that when you create a focus like the Trafficking in Person's office, it relieves everyone else of responsibility to do anything about the problem, because they say oh yes very serious problem. No doubt about it, and we've got this whole office over here with a \$700 million budget which is in danger of being cut, and they're responsible for it. I deal with other things.

It's a real tradeoff. As somebody's who's dealt in arms control and proliferation, it's a dilemma within the State Department itself. There are two kinds of bureaus in the State Department, the regional bureaus which are the bureaus that deal with the bilateral diplomacy between the U.S. and all the other countries in the world that we recognize from

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desk officers all the way up to the regional bureaus themselves. That's one kind of bureau. Then there are functional bureaus which deal with things like arms control and proliferation, economic issues, environmental issues, human rights issues. In the matrix organization of the State Department, there's always a conflict between what the regional bureaus want to do which is have nice relations with the countries in their region and the functional bureaus that are always causing trouble by raising problems in the behavior of these countries in the judgment of what our foreign policy priorities ought to be.

A large part of trying to not just raise the level of awareness but the level of effectiveness of the State Department is how you address and balance this question of the role of the regional bureaus and how the Trafficking in Person's office really can play a more important role. I'd have to say that the record is mixed. This is not a partisan comment. In part, it depends on who's the head of the Trafficking in Person's office. I felt that when John Miller was head of the Trafficking in Person's office in the Bush Administration, he was very effective. He was not shy which is a requirement for that job. He was active, and he was very committed to making trafficking a much more important foreign policy issue.

It doesn't always work out that way, and sometimes even when Congress steps in to try and buttress the importance of dealing with the slavery question, it doesn't necessarily succeed. I think what we've seen over a number of years in the sanction consequences of the *Annual Trafficking and Person's Report* is a pretty good example of that. In the last year that we have 2011, 23 countries were sighted in the report for failures in the trafficking area, but the administration granted full waivers to 13, partial waivers to seven and only denied waivers thus bringing the sanctions into play for three countries North Korea, Eritrea, and Madagascar.

There wasn't a lot of foreign aid that was going to North Korea to begin with. In fact zero from the United States, so the impact of the sanctions on North Korea which in our law has been the most heavily sanctioned country in the world since 1953 was obviously pretty minimal. It reminded me though of how North Korea was handled in the first report by the Special Representative for Religious Freedom which was set up at the same time as the Commission on International Religious Freedom where I served. This is separate. This is a fulltime person in the State Department who also issues an annual report on changes in religious freedoms in countries around the world, and when this person issued his second report on violations of religious freedom around the world, he didn't list North Korea where there is no religious freedom. When asked about that he said, "But my report is only to deal with changes in religious freedom between the time of the current report and the last report and since in the last year there's been no change in the complete absence of religious freedom in North Korea, I didn't think I had to mention it." Only in the State Department could you come up with that.

Look at the places where partial waivers were granted. Cuba, Iran, Venezuela. What are we thinking of? Let's be realistic. There are going to be countries where this National Interest Waiver is granted. Trafficking and persons is not the only issue. Even nuclear weapons



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programs are not necessarily the only issue. The waiver provision is a sensible one. If you're prepared to grant waivers to countries like Cuba and Iran and Venezuela, how are you ever going to make people believe seriously that Trafficking in Person's and related issues are important to the administration.

The report for 2012 was just issued in June. The president will have until next month to make his decision on waivers this year. I suggest this is exactly the right time to try and influence State Department and White House decision making on it. If we develop a pattern where the waivers become almost automatic, let's be honest, the entire exercise is just going to be a waste in paper, because nobody will pay any attention to it.

I'm very much afraid that that's the direction we're going. I think the lesson that you've got to draw from this is that it's certainly important to have a vigorous advocate against human trafficking heading up the Trafficking in Person's office. That's a necessary but not a sufficient condition to have an effective U.S. international posture. The sufficient condition should have to have a president and a Secretary of State who do more than make speeches. Speeches are great. It's part of public diplomacy. It's part of communicating U.S. objectives, but speeches alone don't make foreign policy. Speeches are articulating the policy. They're not the policy itself. The policy needs to be driven by concrete actions. The Trafficking in Person's office director can be a great individual but unless he or she is backed by Secretary of State who believes in the importance for American foreign policy of irradiating human trafficking, they're not going to be successful.

My conclusion is that Congress remains a far more important for dealing with human trafficking. Not just in the United States but internationally. Certainly in our country the state and local levels are also critical. Congress is the place to apply pressure not the U.N. General Assembly. There are only a finite amount of resources at any given time that people are willing to devote to the trafficking issue for well or ill. The question is as always where are you going to apply those resources most effectively, and I think it's in our legislative agenda to spotlight the issue. I think that rather than focus on resolutions that make everybody feel good in the U.N. that it's bilateral pressure. It's often going to be private bilateral pressure rather than public pressure, behind the scenes to work with countries individually or in small groups to get them to change their policies and directions that we want.

Finally, we are just a couple of weeks away from our two national, political conventions. We've got elections on November the sixth. This is a political season, and if our elected officials and would be elected officials don't listen to the people now during the middle of election campaigns, they're never going to listen to people. You're going to have candidates in debates all over the country. You're going to have them in town halls. You're going to have them in rallies. This is the place to ask them across the board what do you think of this issue? What priority do you put on eliminating this modern form of slavery? What are you prepared to do if you're elected to the Senate or the House or the presidency?

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The last presidential debate is going to be a town hall format. The debate, according to the rules of the Presidential Debate Commission, so I'm sure they're going to have email questions and things like that. It'd very interesting to see if you could get a question in to the candidates on how they feel about that issue. The next three months are really critical to making sure that candidates who have been certainly at the federal level and the House and the Senate who have put human trafficking as a priority are reelected and others who seek election to make sure that they are committed to the issue as well. That's why ultimately we are responsible for our government. We get the kind of government we deserve. That ought to be enough to get you into the streets and acting on it. I just want to say again I'm very honored to have the chance to be with you today. I wish you good luck in all of your efforts. Thank you very much.

The word "NO" is rendered in a large, red, hand-drawn style outline font. The letters are thick and have a slightly irregular, sketchy appearance.

The word "MORE" is rendered in a large, grey, solid block font. The letters are thick and have a slightly irregular, sketchy appearance.