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The Ugly American — Sex Trafficking and Our National Humiliation



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The sexual revolution of the last several decades has transformed any public conversation about sex and sexuality. The revolutionaries directed their attention to the dismantling of an entire edifice of sexual morality that had been basically intact for well over 2,000 years.



At one point in the sexual revolution, efforts were made to legalize prostitution as a “victimless crime,” a term that anyone could recognize as an oxymoron. Most of these efforts went nowhere in the United States and most of Europe, though “progressive” law enforcement officials often looked the other way and did little to curb the market for illicit sex.

Then something truly interesting started to happen. Influential forces in society began to notice the scale and magnitude of the market for sex. Law enforcement officials started to acknowledge the fact that women, along with under-age girls and boys, were being “trafficked” through international networks of gangsters. By the end of the last decade, American officials were aware that sex trafficking was taking place in cities large and small. Women, along with boys and girls, were being kidnapped in far parts of the world and on the streets of American cities, to be sold into what could only be considered as sexual

slavery.

Over time, the shadow of international sex trafficking became evident in criminal networks that span the globe. Women and girls answering advertisements for models, maids, and child minders found themselves sold into slavery and transported around the world.

Wealthy Americans booked vacations to destinations where their sexual appetite of choice, including children, could be easily purchased. As recently as the 2012 Super Bowl, American officials warned that several hundred under-age sex workers might be brought into the host city. These developments make the international sex trafficking networks impossible to deny.

Then came the news that at least eleven Secret Service agents had been involved in a prostitution scandal in Cartagena, Colombia in advance of a visit there by President Barack Obama. It is believed that several members of the United States military were also involved. Even as that scandal began to break, the international media reported that cities like Cartagena have become magnets for the sex trade, with much of their business provided by lustful Americans.

Critics of the Secret Service suggested that a good many of its agents adopted a motto of “wheels up, rings off,” indicating plans to visit prostitutes in their destination city. They planned their involvement with prostitutes well in advance of their arrival to “advance” the President’s trip, it is alleged.

As if Americans were not sufficiently shocked, *USA Today* reported that the Secret Service scandal was “no aberration.” Kirsten Powers reported: “Men working abroad on behalf of our government engage in this kind of behavior so frequently that the Pentagon was forced in 2004 to draft an anti-prostitution rule aimed at preventing the U.S. military from being complicit in fueling sex trafficking.”

It appears that the rule did not restrain those involved in the Cartagena scandal, nor many others. Powers also reported that the American government has been aware for some time that much of the energy in the international sex trafficking underworld comes from American government personnel, both in uniform and out.

Powers cited Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ), who declared that “women and girls are being forced into prostitution for a clientele consisting largely of military services members, government contractors and international peacekeepers.”

One report indicates that young girls have been kidnapped in Eastern Europe “specifically to be sold to the American contractors to use for sex.” Those contractors were there under the auspices of our government to establish peace and security in the aftermath

of the Bosnian crisis.

As Kirsten Powers observed, “Representatives of the U.S. government should be setting the standard for the world, not feeding the problem of sex trafficking. The chances that the women or girls the Secret Service agents procured for their pleasure were there by free will is very low. Most likely, they were sex slaves.”

Thankfully, there is much less talk these days about prostitution and sex trafficking as a “victimless crime.” Few crimes offer such a dismal view of the human moral reality. There is a ready market for every form of lust, and criminal syndicates stand ready to sell anyone and anything for a price.

Bringing the story even closer to home, Nicholas Kristof of *The New York Times* reported the story of a sex worker in New York City. “If you think sex trafficking only happens in faraway places like Nepal or Thailand, then you should listen to an expert on American sex trafficking I interviewed the other day,” he wrote. “But, first, wish her happy birthday. She turns 16 years old on Thursday.”

Kristof told of “Brianna,” who had been effectively kidnapped and sold into the sex trade after she ran away from home for only one night at age 12. He also described the prominence of major Internet sex trafficking sites, one of which “accounts for about 70 percent of America’s prostitution ads.” Brianna reported that she had been offered on such a site, estimating that half of the business into which she was sold came through the site. Chillingly, Kristof also reported that major Wall Street financial firms were profiting by the business.

Kirsten Powers got it just right when she wrote, “We have a global epidemic of sex trafficking.” I can only wonder how many Americans understand that the “we” in that statement means us — the American people. When a congressman can admit for us all that women and girls are being forced into the sex trade for a clientele “consisting largely” of American government officials and contractors along with the U.S. military, that problem becomes the responsibility of every American.

American Christians, who understand the incomprehensible scandal and moral horror of sex trafficking must recognize that this is an issue of high moral priority.

We must demand the enforcement of laws meant to protect human beings from being sold into sexual slavery and the vigorous prosecution of those who are engaged in sex trafficking. We must demand that any American involved in such activities be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, and that every effort be made to release women and young people from sexual slavery.

No American can rest with an easy conscience while this nation is known around the world for sending out officials, business associates, government contractors, and military personnel whose motto is “wheels up, rings off.”

This scandal has revealed that the concept of the Ugly American has taken on a humiliating new dimension.

I am always glad to hear from readers. Write me at mail@albertmohler.com. Follow regular updates on Twitter at www.twitter.com/AlbertMohler

Kirsten Powers, “Colombia Scandal Exposes Sex Trafficking Growth,” *USA Today*, Thursday, April 19, 2012.

Nicholas Kristof, “Not Quite a Teen, Yet Sold for Sex,” *The New York Times*, Thursday, April 19, 2012.

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