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## U.S. May Punish Troops Seeing Prostitutes

By The Associated Press

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/national/AP-Military-Prostitutes.html>  
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WASHINGTON (AP) – U.S. troops stationed overseas could face courts-martial for patronizing prostitutes under a new regulation drafted by the Pentagon.

The move is part of a Defense Department effort to lessen the possibility that troops will contribute to human trafficking in areas near their overseas bases by seeking the services of women forced into prostitution.

In recent years, “women and girls are being forced into prostitution for a clientele consisting largely of military services members, government contractors and international peacekeepers” in places like South Korea and the Balkans, Rep. Christopher Smith, R-N.J., said Tuesday at a Capitol Hill forum on Pentagon anti-trafficking efforts.

Defense officials have drafted an amendment to the manual on courts-martial that would make it an offense for U.S. troops to use the services of prostitutes, said Charles Abell, a Pentagon undersecretary for personnel and readiness.

If approved, that would make it a military offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice to have contact with a prostitute, Lt. Col. Ellen Krenke, an Abell spokeswoman said later. The draft rule is open to 60 days public comment after being published in the Federal Register, she said.

Officials also are developing a training program for troops and contractors, to be distributed in November. The program will explain trafficking, department policy on it and possible legal action against violators, Abell said in a written statement.

Additionally, the military is reviewing regulations and procedures for placing off-limits those businesses where such activities take place and working with Justice Department officials to tighten rules on contractor misconduct.

Gen. Leon J. LaPorte, commander of the 37,000 U.S. troops in South Korea, said another initiative started on the peninsula has been to “make on-base military life a more desirable experience, and attempt to diminish the seductive appeal of many of the less wholesome off-duty pursuits.”

That effort includes offering expanded evening and weekend education programs, band concerts, late-night sports leagues and expanded chaplains’ activities.

All new arrivals to duty in Korea are given prostitution and human trafficking awareness and the military is working with Korean law enforcement agencies, he said.

“In spite of all these efforts, we know that there are still some U.S. service members, Department of Defense civilians and contractor personnel who may continue to contact prostitutes and, thereby, be construed as supporting human trafficking,” LaPorte said.

NATO officials in July outlined new guidelines adopted to ensure alliance peacekeepers do not encourage sex trafficking gangs by seeking the services of women forced into prostitution.

The rules follows accusations from human rights groups that NATO peacekeepers and civilian staff working for international organizations had fueled the growth of sexual slavery in the Balkans.

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