

# Fighting Corruption Around the World Promotes Security at Home

## ***Biden administration commits to anticorruption efforts in the name of national security***

A Media Statement from the U.S. Office of Transparency International  
June 3, 2021

In a National Security Study Memorandum released today, the Biden Administration called for steps to address the connection between corruption and national security, and announced the Administration's commitment to fighting the former in order to protect the latter.

Transparency International's U.S. Office issued the following statement:

Today's landmark memorandum from the Administration recognizes a real, multidimensional, and growing threat to U.S. and global security.

Corruption threatens U.S. troops, longstanding alliances, and strategic assets, weakening our ability to maintain national security. That's why it's critically important to not only recognize the link between corruption and national security, but to energetically pursue anticorruption efforts as a key part of the larger national security agenda.

There's a tight and devastating link between corruption, national security, and violence. The spoils of corruption fund the purchase of weapons to arm violent militias that operate outside the rule of law, protecting the corrupt and propping up their regimes by harassing, jailing, and even killing those who speak out against them.

Corruption also threatens national security when stolen money makes its way into the hands of terrorists. In Afghanistan, where local contractors were controlled by the Taliban, defense funds ended up in the hands of terrorists rather than local businesses that contribute to the recovery of the country.

Tragically, corrupt states are often also failed states, from which migrants flee. In Guatemala, for example, the corrupt and violent alliance of organized crime and

political institutions continues to drive desperate migrants north to the United States.

China and Russia use bribery strategically to further their own interests. For instance, China has billed its Belt and Road initiative as an overseas aid effort, disguising the bribery schemes it employs to undermine U.S. and European interests.

The Memorandum is a critical first step in raising these issues with our allies and other nations. The whole-of-government approach as described in the Memorandum is both appropriate and necessary. The President and his Administration will have numerous opportunities throughout 2021 to substantiate these words with concrete steps and prove that today's memorandum is more than just another government report. For example, the President can provide leadership at the upcoming meetings with G7 nations, and the Administration can promote aggressive anti-corruption measures during the ongoing meetings of the G20 nations and throughout the current review of international anti-money laundering standards at the Financial Action Task Force. Furthermore, the U.S. Agency for International Development, along with our representatives to the International Monetary Fund, can ensure that anti-corruption measures are a part of any pandemic relief and recovery packages.

In addition, the Treasury Department is currently drafting rules to establish a new beneficial ownership registry that will effectively end the abuse of anonymous shell companies in the United States, and will soon also engage in a once-in-a-generation update to our nation's broader anti-money laundering rules. These rulemakings must result in robust and highly useful new regulations that can stop the flow of illicit funds, including the proceeds of foreign corruption, from poisoning the U.S. financial system. Finally, Administration officials planning the upcoming Summit for Democracy can ensure that the convening focuses on the meaningful enforcement of existing anti-corruption commitments made by participating nations.

We welcome the stated commitment to an anti-corruption agenda as a key part of the national security strategy and look forward to working with the Administration on these and other initiatives in the coming months.

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Transparency International is the world's largest coalition against corruption. We give voices to victims and witnesses of corruption, and work with governments, businesses, and citizens to stop the abuse of entrusted power. In collaboration with national chapters in

more than 100 countries, we are leading the fight to turn our vision of a world free from corruption into reality.

Our U.S. office focuses on stemming the harms caused by illicit finance, strengthening political integrity, and promoting a positive U.S. role in global anti-corruption initiatives. Through a combination of research, advocacy, and policy, we engage with stakeholders to increase public understanding of corruption and hold institutions and individuals accountable.

### **Related Resources**

- [Memorandum on Establishing the Fight Against Corruption as a Core United States National Security Interest](#)
- [TI-US Comment on FinCEN's Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Implementation of the Corporate Transparency Act](#)
- [Congress Can Counter Foreign Corruption and Strengthen Rule of Law By Passing the CROOK Act](#)
- [Combating Global Corruption: A Bipartisan Plan](#)

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