

Building integrity and reducing corruption risk – the way forward

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Mr Chairman, distinguished Ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured to be here with you today.

Transparency International is passionate about building integrity and addressing corruption risk in organisations across the globe to improve living standards and security for the general public. Corruption is not only a waste of money - it is a prime cause of poverty, of ***insecurity*** and a principal barrier to the development and growth of nations.

Transparency International's work in defence and security is a recent undertaking. Our first project, established 5 years ago, focused on raising standards among international defence companies. It has developed into an extensive programme with governments, defence ministries and armed forces around the world. The unexpected support we have encountered has allowed this work to move far beyond the initial scope of what we hoped to achieve.

We have been working closely with major defence companies to form an anti-bribery forum. This group, chaired by Lord George Robertson, has developed new anti-corruption standards for international defence contractors. The commitment of these companies to build and operate in a bribe free environment is genuine, but it needs reciprocal action from governments to make it real.

The importance of tackling corruption in defence has taken on huge resonance. The state is charged with the protection of its citizens as the holder of the monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Citizens cannot confer legitimacy upon the state if they cannot be assured of the integrity of those who hold its offices. The armed forces cannot carry out their mandates without public trust and legitimacy, both of which corrode rapidly when beset by perceptions of corruption. States also have a duty to administer public finances prudently and efficiently, and this cannot happen when funds intended for security spending are misappropriated or misspent. Given the severe pressure on public budgets and the likelihood of further stress on defence expenditure, the most efficient use of funds is becoming more and more crucial for all nations at this table.

The importance of combating networks of corruption and organised crime is clear. Corruption facilitates the circumvention of border controls, proliferation of illicit equipment and weaponry, and the movement of illicit gains. Yet while these issues are recognised as problems requiring coordinated international action, scant attention is paid to the defence and security establishment mechanisms that allow them to occur, or the role that corruption plays.

As can be seen in the Balkans and in Afghanistan, the importance of developing anti-corruption awareness and strategies on the ground is central to the success of those missions. The first duty of international forces is to establish security on the ground; in the long-term, this duty must be taken on by the authorities of the country itself. Building defence and security establishments in such environments is a difficult and dangerous task. The temptation to compromise on issues of integrity is always present, but must be resisted. The adequate and legitimate provision of security rests on trust, and security and defence establishments founded in corruption cannot deliver. In such circumstances, citizens may turn to others to provide their security.

Given the importance of these issues, we are very pleased to have the opportunity to work in partnership with NATO and the EAPC to raise awareness, develop practical tools and build capabilities.

The stocktaking report that you have highlights the progress made in a relatively short time. We are very encouraged by the number of nations, both NATO members and PfP, participating in the training course and integrity self-assessments. The individuals taking part are becoming the backbone of a new network across the EAPC.

Perhaps the most important result of our collaboration is the increased confidence of nations around this table that corruption in defence and security can be tackled. It is *not* 'too difficult', and it is *not* 'too sensitive'. It *can* be directly addressed. To quote an

Afghan army officer at a recent training module: “At last! Somebody is ready to talk explicitly and constructively about addressing corruption”.

Where do we go from here? I would like to offer you a few suggestions:

First, the stocktaking report confirms that we have a proven model for success. We should build on this and move from ad hoc project to a focused multi-year programme. We have established a small but solid basis of cooperation with training and education facilities including a number of PfP centres. I think we should be ambitious and expand the number of mobile teams.

Second, the tools and process need to be anchored in core NATO business, we are encouraged that Building Integrity is reflected in various NATO partnership instruments such as Ukraine’s annual target plans. I urge you to take this further.

Third, the world needs a much deeper and more sustained approach to corruption in conflict and post-conflict countries and fragile state environments. I hope that any new programme will include a tailored approach for Afghanistan and better sharing of lessons learned.

The fourth suggestion is about leadership. This initiative has succeeded because of the clear support of the EAPC, in particular the leadership of the three lead nations and the individuals in the International Staff who have worked over and above the demands of their jobs to make it a success. I am referring of course to Susan Pond and Adrian Kendry, who deserve the full thanks of the EAPC and of all of us as citizens. Having established a record of success and having laid the ground work, we now need to expand this pool of skills, especially in nations. The NATO School and its network of expertise and institutions can play an important role in this regard.

Transparency International is proud to be associated with the EAPC and NATO in building integrity and reducing corruption risk, and we look forward to our continued

collaboration. This is a long-term process; if sustained it has the potential to have a great and lasting impact on defence and security integrity and broader society.

Transparency International applauds the work that NATO and the EAPC has initiated. We are encouraged that this topic is reflected in the declaration and from the Strasbourg – Kehl Summit. I urge you to use this EAPC meeting to agree **a step change** in the scale of this initiative so as to show that NATO and our nations are responding to this challenge.

Additional information about Transparency International and our work in this area is available at the table at the entrance.

Thank You